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WORLD OF SPORT

Year-end Sports Wrap-up

It's all in the WORLD OF SPORT TODAY

PA stamps fail to get seal of approval on Christmas cards

TOM GROSS

CHRISTIANS are having trouble sending their Christmas cards between Israel and the Palestinian Authority areas this year.

"I wanted to send some greeting cards to my friends in Jerusalem," said Linda, a student at Bethlehem University. "But I've heard they're not getting through. Palestinian post offices are refusing to accept cards with Israeli stamps, while the PA postage designs haven't got the stamp of approval from Israel yet."

Postal authorities in many Palestinian-controlled towns are only delivering letters and cards with PA stamps. Most have a picture of either Yasser Arafat or the Palestinian flag on them. But to be sure Palestinian Christians know the PA is looking out for them too - one stamp has a picture of Arafat with the Pope.

"I wanted to post my Christmas cards with Bethlehem postmarks," said one bemused Bolivian tourist who found herself in a sticky situation.

Locals have their own solutions. "The university authorities, who don't have to apply for permission to enter Israel, are going over to the nearby Jerusalem suburb of Gilo with a large sack and posting our mail using Israeli stamps," said Brother Vincent Malham, who teaches piano at the music faculty of Bethlehem University.

"When people want to send mail abroad, this is not so difficult, as the Palestinian stamps can be delivered via Jordan or Egypt. But the problem is writing to Israel," said Fadi, a second-year business and marketing student. "Incoming letters with Israeli stamps get here eventually, but take at least twice as long as they should do to reach us from nearby Jerusalem."

The atmosphere in Bethlehem this Christmas is very different from the euphoria in the town a year ago, following the withdrawal of the IDF.

The authorities have been hit by a cash crisis that has meant they have had difficulty finding funds to pay for fireworks, decorations, cleaning, road repairs and the thousands of colored light bulbs to adorn the city in the run-up to tonight's Midnight Mass celebrations, which will be broadcast around the globe.

"We are facing Christmas without enough money to beautify the city," said Elias Freij, the town's Christian mayor, as well as the Palestinian minister of tourism.

Last year, although Israel had already handed the town over to Palestinian control two days before Christmas, the government footed the bill.



US envoy Dennis Ross (left) and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat speak to reporters yesterday in Gaza after meeting for another round of discussions on the long-awaited Hebron redeployment.

Gov't to hit women, employers for another NIS 350m. in revenues

EVERLYN GORDON AND DAVID HARRIS

THE government plans to raise another NIS 350 million in revenues by removing certain tax benefits from working women and by increasing the number of sick-leave days for which an employer has to pay.

This solution was decided upon after the numerous changes made to the economic arrangements bill in the Knesset Finance Committee Sunday left the government with a revenue gap of several hundred million shekels. Since the government cannot propose amendments to its own bill, Likud faction chairman Michael Eitan submitted these proposed amendments on its behalf, to be passed with the budget during its second and third readings.

Treasury director-general David Brodet admitted last night that the government has raised taxes. "We have tried very hard not to increase taxation. We have not increased VAT, income tax, or employers' National Insurance contributions, but we have increased taxes, say, on cigarettes and fuel."

According to Finance Committee chairman Avraham Ravitz (United Torah Judaism), the main proposal is the cancellation of the tax credit given to working women when the National Health Insurance Law was passed two years ago. This would save the government some NIS 300m. a year.

Employers now pay for the first two days of sick leave and the National Insurance Institute pays thereafter. The proposed amendment, according to the Treasury, would have employers pay for the first nine days.

That would give employers an incentive to crack down on people who stay out for long periods who they are not really sick and save some NIS 80m. a year, Ravitz said. Ravitz broached the issue of these revenue-raising amendments during his speech kicking off the plenum debate on the bill's second and third readings. "There are still a few amendments which we will recommend that you pass," he said.

These would be in addition to the sizable hike in gasoline and cigarette taxes the government has imposed. (See box)

The debate itself is expected to

last through the middle of next week, as some 5,000 amendments have been submitted to the bill. Since each amendment entitles its proposer to five minutes of speaking time, the debate could, in theory, take more than 400 hours. In practice, many MKs will lose their

turn by failing to show up. In a rare move, however, all 120 MKs will have to be available to vote virtually throughout the entire debate.

In previous years, the government and opposition always agreed to hold all the votes at the end of the debate, leaving MKs free to ignore the debate until (Continued on Page 2)

PM hopes summit will yield deal

DAVID MAKOVSKY AND JON IMMANUEL

PRIME Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat are expected to meet today or tomorrow over the Hebron redeployment deal.

The premier was awaiting an answer from Arafat late last night whether such a meeting would be for actually signing a deal, and not for further bargaining. Arafat reportedly said he would meet Netanyahu today, Israel Radio said.

Once again, there was hope that, after so many reversals, the protracted negotiations on the IDF pullback in Hebron may finally reach a successful conclusion.

Jordan's King Hussein phoned Netanyahu last night and voiced optimism that the two sides were near agreement. Palestinian negotiator Mahmoud Abbas said that he also thought an agreement was very near.

"We expect a deal tonight. Negotiations are continuing," said Palestinian negotiator Jamil Tarifi, on his way into Hebron talks at Jerusalem's Laromne Hotel between Israeli and PLO officials. He did not elaborate.

Last night, US special Middle East peace coordinator Dennis Ross informed Netanyahu of his sudden trip to Egypt yesterday, which was designed to obtain President Hosni Mubarak's blessing on what has been obtained by Israeli and Palestinian negotiators.

Officials said they expect some Egyptian representation at a signing ceremony, creating speculation that this would be Foreign Minister Amr Moussa. Ross, who was scheduled to

return to the US last night, has extended his stay. He was scheduled to meet Arafat late last night in Gaza to find out, in the words of Netanyahu, "whether Arafat is ready to close."

Netanyahu wants to avoid a situation whereby the Palestinian leader would try to use a summit meeting for final bargaining, senior Israeli officials say, based on the experience of Arafat's negotiating maneuvers during the past few years. Hence, Netanyahu wants to know in advance the nature of the meeting with Arafat, according to the sources.

Moreover, some officials suggested that Netanyahu would prefer the meeting be held secretly, fearing that Arafat would seek to leverage the build-up of a public meeting as a means to wring final concessions.

It seems that a key turnabout occurred in an all-night session Sunday which ended before dawn yesterday morning in Gaza. The meeting was important, as it included not only Arafat and Ross, but also top negotiators Yitzhak Molcho and IDF Planning Branch head Maj.-Gen. Shaul Mofaz.

Officials say this session was crucial in enabling Arafat to directly understand detailed Israeli security concerns. Apparently at this meeting Arafat accepted restrictions on weaponry Palestinians could use in zones around Hebron, including surrounding hillsides.

Apparently, Arafat's agreement to restrict weaponry comes amid Israeli agreement to be more forthcoming. It remains unclear what (Continued on Page 9)

Gasoline and tobacco prices rise

DAVID HARRIS

THE price of unleaded gasoline rose 9.5 percent last night, as the government announced increases in the prices of both fuel and cigarettes. Foreign cigarettes rose in price by an average 10.8%, and local cigarettes are up some 13.2%.

The increase in fuel prices will bring up to NIS 750 million into government coffers, according to a senior source in the National Infrastructure Ministry's Fuel Administration. However, Treasury budget director Ran Kroll said this increase will only net the government some NIS 250m.

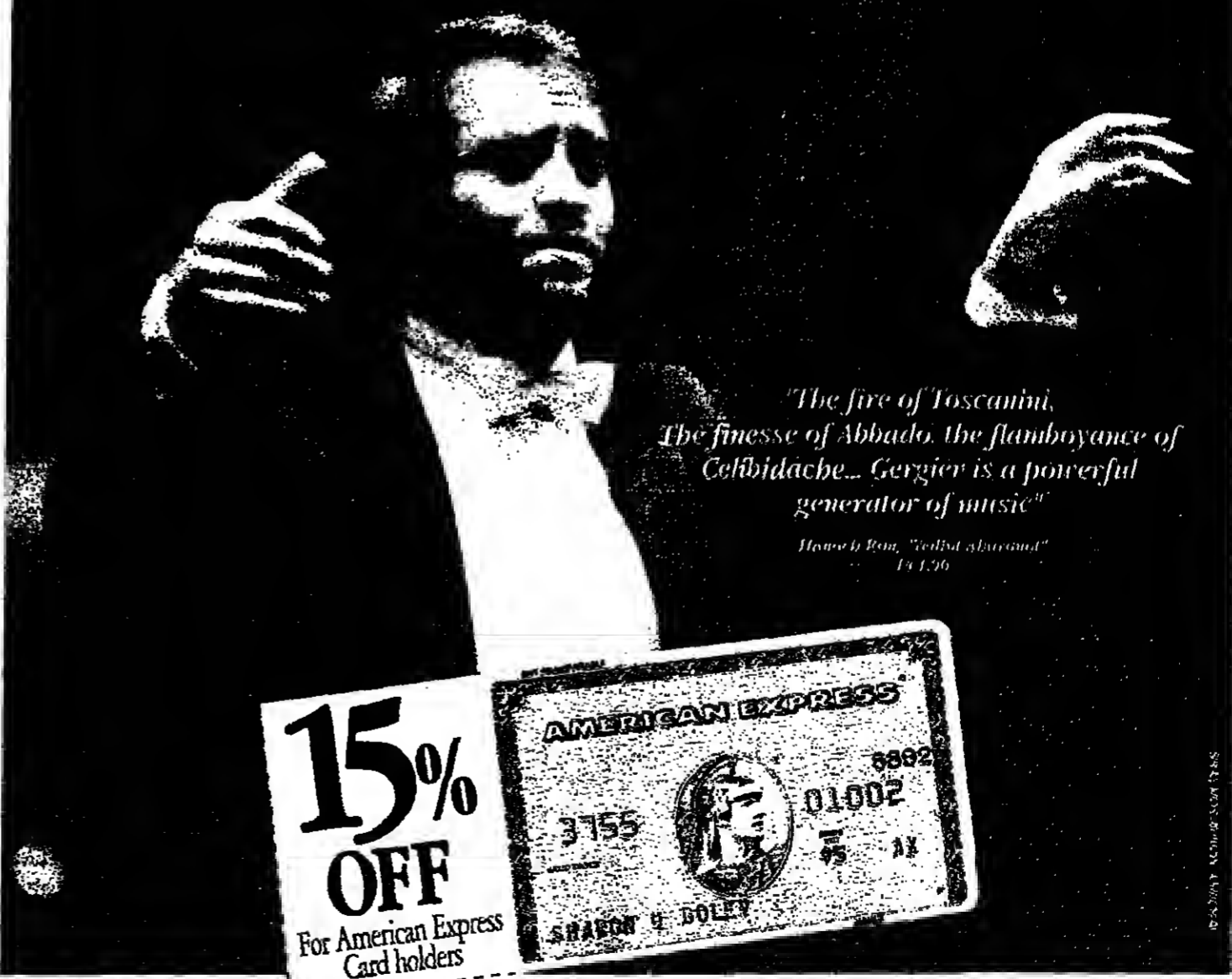
The price hikes include: 96 Octane gasoline up 6.5% to NIS 3.19. Unleaded gasoline up 9.5% to NIS 3.19. Kent, Marlboro, and Parliament cigarettes up to NIS 10.30 a pack.

Time, Time Light and Europa cigarettes up to NIS 6.30. Meanwhile, the excise duty on kerosene, diesel for transport vehicles, and heating fuel was reduced by 33%. This does not mean, however, that there will be a 33% price reduction on these products. More budget coverage, Page 12

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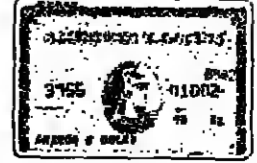
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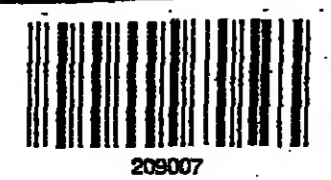
Thursday 9.1.97 at 20:30 Aqaba, Jordan Opening Festive Concert, Under the Patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan, Shirbani Shalabayev Odessa Zakharov works commissioned in honor of Peace Mississippi Night on a Field Mountain Rimski-Korsakov's Sinfonietta (piano) - Armenian Sketches. Friday 10.1.97 at 21:00 Eilat, Festive Concert in the presence of Mr. Gadi Kadush - Mayor of Eilat, Romeo and Juliet in Music, Berlioz: Romeo and Juliet - Dramatic Symphony Mauro Tarrasova, mezzo-soprano Tena, to be announced Sergei Akhmedkin, bass. Saturday 11.1.97 at 21:00 Eilat, Verdi "Requiem", Shura Svet, soprano Mauro Tarrasova, mezzo-soprano Tena, to be announced Sergei Akhmedkin, bass. More Concerts: 11:00: A Cappella - "Kirov" Opera Choir, at 19:00: Concert of Music. Sunday 12.1.97, 16:00 - Eilat: A Family Concert, Eclectic Palestinian Dances from "Prince of Peace" by Arafat, "Peter and the Wolf".

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## NRP slams Stern for remarks supporting Palestinian state

NATIONAL Religious Party MKs and senior members unanimously condemned MK Avraham Stern for supporting the creation of a Palestinian State during recent interviews.

Although Stern said his statements had been taken out of context and misinterpreted, he refused to unequivocally retract them.

"For the moment we must stick by the party platform. That's not to say that in another three months we shouldn't discuss it," Stern reportedly said at the meeting.

In an interview in *Ha'aretz* yesterday, Stern was quoted saying the question of a Palestinian state is what prevents a broad national consensus.

"Therefore I don't rule it out altogether, if there is a chance for a peace arrangement and that is the element which holds it up," he told *Ha'aretz*. "I don't want a Palestinian state either, but it doesn't seem to me to be a sacred issue. In my opinion, it's possible to create such a state on condition it doesn't have a massive military, the ability to produce arms, and the right to exchange ambassadors with other countries."

He made the comment in response to the statements made by the prime minister's communications director David Bar-Ilan in an interview with *The Jerusalem Post* on Friday.

LIAT COLLINS

At the end of yesterday's meeting, however, the NRP issued a statement saying it upholds its platform, which states that there will be no Palestinian state or foreign national entity between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

"The NRP faction unanimously determines that the movement's platform is binding on Knesset votes on political issues and calls on its members to represent its political stand only within the framework of the platform," the statement said.

In the closed meeting, party members roundly castigated Stern, party sources said. Former MK Haim Druckman described Stern's statements as "incomparably and irreparably miserable, deeply wounding the position of the State of Israel."

NRP faction chairman Hanan Porat told Stern "in my opinion you have crossed a red line. It is a great disservice to the state and movement."

MK Shaul Yahalom dismissed a suggestion to convene the party's central committee over Stern's statements, saying it might give the impression that there is something to discuss. The Third Way also discussed the issue in its

faction meeting.

"We decided to ask our friends in the Likud to stop the meetings with [Labor MK] Yossi Beilin and his friends because these meetings were intended to establish on the ground the Beilin-Abu Mazen plan, which the Third Way can't accept. It abandons the Jordan Valley and would hand over more than 90 percent of Judea and Samaria to the Palestinians," said Third Way faction chairman Yehuda Harel, who accused the Likud of "ideological demoralization."

Stern's statements, and comments by Yehuda Lankri (Gesher) on the possibility of a cross-party consensus to support permanent arrangements based on the principle of separation also came up in the Labor faction meeting.

MK Ephraim Sneh said the statements by these coalition MKs were important "for recognizing that there is no turning back from what has been reached with the Palestinians and no better compromise than that based on the principle of separation."

Robby Rivlin (Likud), however, accused Stern and Lankri of seeking headlines.

"There are those who think it's 'in' to say the creation of a Palestinian state is desirable. It's not 'in.' It will cause us to be out. An 'in' Palestinian state means the Israeli state will be out."

## Bentsur: Russia plans MKs tour Ras al-Amud Israel-Arab summit

LIAT COLLINS

RUSSIA is planning to host a summit with Israel, the Palestinians, and Arab states in the aim of reviving the Madrid formula and hastening multilateral negotiations in particular, Foreign Ministry director-general Eitan Bentsur said yesterday.

There has been no progress in some of the multilateral groups for a long time.

Bentsur also said an Israeli-Palestinian meeting would soon take place in Gaza under Norwegian sponsorship, with the hope that humanitarian organizations will attend, as part of an effort to decide on ways to build trust.

The idea behind the gathering is that an improvement in the welfare of Palestinians will help strengthen the peace process. The Foreign Ministry welcomed the meeting.

Bentsur also said that Israel, the Palestinians, and the Arab states involved in the peace process are trying to develop a "code of behavior" in the aim of preventing an immediate connection between the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and Israel's peace process with the Arab states.

This initiative is apparently due to the strong reaction of Egypt and Jordan to the difficulties in the negotiations on Hebron. (Itim)

MEMBERS of the Knesset Interior Committee toured the Ras al-Amud neighborhood yesterday to see the area slated for Jewish housing that has roused the ire of Arabs.

The MKs did not change their views during the tour and stuck with their party lines.

MK Benny Elon (Moledet) said he was surprised by the amount of housing and property being sold by Arabs to Jews in the Jerusalem area. He said some members of the Palestinian Authority were cooperating silently with this. Elon accused Arab MKs, and in particular Salah Salim (Hadash), of inciting Ras al-Amud's Arab residents to turn Jerusalem into the capital of a Palestinian state. Salim denied incitement.

"This neighborhood will be built, not immediately because the

political and international situation doesn't permit it," said Emanuel Zissman (Third Way), "but many things are built in Jerusalem when one acts wisely and sensibly."

Avraham Poraz (Shinui-Meretz) said that just as he "would object to establishing an Arab neighborhood in western Jerusalem, without harming the city's unity, I think it would be a mistake to build a Jewish neighborhood here."

Avraham Stern (National Religious Party) said there are "things one can compromise on, but not on Jerusalem. If we make even the smallest concession on Jerusalem we will lose the battle."

Committee chairman Sallah Tarif (Labor) warned it "is dangerous to build here. It's likely to turn into a second [Western Wall] Tunnel episode."



Top Palestinian negotiator Mahmoud Abbas leaves the King David Hotel in Jerusalem yesterday, following talks on the Hebron redeployment with an Israeli delegation that included Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu. (Ariel Jeruzolimski)

## Hebron settlers: Pact will lead to our community's destruction

HERB KEINON

HEBRON settlement activists lobbying legislators in the Knesset last night warned it will only be a matter of time after a Hebron redeployment agreement is signed before the Jews there become targets of terror.

"If the agreement is signed as it is, it will be just a matter of time before Jewish blood is spilled in the city," said Moshe Ben-Zimra, a spokesman for the settlement.

None of the Hebron activists had any information on the agreement beyond what was reported in the media, but they gave the

impression that they thought the long-delayed agreement would soon be signed.

"I feel that we have been deceived by [Prime Minister] Netanyahu," Ben-Zimra said. "He has not lived up to his agreement with the voters."

Hebron settlement leader Noam Arnon said of the agreement, "This is the first step towards the destruction of the Jewish community in Hebron."

What particularly concerned

Arnon were reports that Shuhada Street, which goes from the Machpela Cave to Tel Rumeida, will be opened to Palestinian traffic. He said this will enable drive-by shootings, attempts by Palestinians drivers to run over Jews, and even the planting of car bombs on the main artery serving what Arnon termed the "Jewish ghetto."

"Netanyahu will go down in history as the prime minister who led to the destruction of the Jewish settlement in Hebron," Arnon said.

On the anniversary of the passing of our dear mother and grandmother

**LILLY SEGAL** ז"ל

Services will be held on Friday, December 27, 1996 (4th Tevet, 5757), at 2 p.m., at the Sdeh Yehoshua Cemetery, Gate Aleph (Kfar Samir).

Roni and Ehud Goldberg and family  
Leah Weiss and family

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The leadership and staff of the State of Israel Bonds Organization extend deepest sympathy and condolences to

Anne and Gideon Patt and family  
on the death of

**CAROL (Akiva) PICKEL** ז"ל

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In deep sorrow, we announce the death of our dear husband, father, grandfather and brother

**CAROL PICKEL**

The funeral will take place today, Tuesday, December 24, 1996, at 2:30 p.m., at the Savyon cemetery.  
Shiva will be held at the Patt residence, 51 Hagderot Street, Savyon.

Mourning by his:

Wife: **Rose Pickel**  
Daughters: **Anne and Gideon Patt**  
**Renée and Alex Monro**  
Grandchildren: **Daniel and Jodi Patt**  
**Doron and Deborah Patt**  
**Efi Patt**  
Brother: **Arie (Louis) and Lea Pickel**  
Sister: **Eilizabeth Lipchutz**

In deep sorrow we announce the passing of our father and head of the family

**ZVI AVNON**

The funeral will take place today, leaving from the Sanhedria Funeral Home, Jerusalem, at 11 a.m. for the Mount of Olives, Jerusalem.

Mourning by his:

Son, **Dan Avnon** and family  
Daughter, **Ruth Gilad** and family

## Mordechai leaves for Egypt

ANSWERING a personal invitation from President Hosni Mubarak, Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai pays an official visit to Egypt today and is expected to update the Egyptian leader on the progress in the talks with the Palestinians.

"It's my intention to tell the president that Israel's face is turned toward peace and security with all nations in the region, to examine with him ways to strengthen the relations between Egypt and Israel and to update him on the negotiations with the Palestinians," Mordechai said last night. The visit will be the first to Egypt by Mordechai, a former OC Northern Command and decorated veteran of fierce fighting against the Egyptians in the Yom Kippur War.

Arieh O'Sullivan

(Continued from Page 1)

then. This year, however, Labor insisted that votes be held on each separate item as it came up, and the coalition decided not to use its majority in the Knesset House Committee to force a different arrangement.

"I will fight for the right of opposition MKs to express themselves and criticize the government, just as we did during the last government," Elton said. "We will try to have all arrangements regarding the voting reached by agreement, so that MKs' right to express themselves will not be restricted."

During the opening of the debate, Ravitz praised the last-minute changes in the bill, saying there was no need for further

**SOCIAL & PERSONAL**

World Enthusi welcomes the participants of the Canadian Emma and Mirachi Dedication Mission.

## BUDGET

amendments (other than the revenue-raising measures).

"The bill is now more progressive than the original proposal," said Ravitz. "As far as I am aware, changes such as [Finance] committee members made in the economic arrangements bill are unprecedented... and I definitely also attribute this to the flexibility of the finance minister [Dan Meridor]."

Avraham Shohat (Labor), the first opposition speaker, responded by denouncing the government for its inability to pass its original program.

Shohat quoted Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's now-famous "read my lips" promise not to raise taxes, made this summer in Caesarea, as well as his statement at the same forum that "we will pass the budget exactly as we presented it."

"Not a single promise was kept," Shohat said. "What did they do? They raised taxes!"

"I said [when the bill was first presented] that it would not pass in the same form as it entered the Knesset... but I never dreamed it would undergo such major changes," he added. "We have here a new economic arrangements bill."

Liav Collins adds: The Labor Knesset faction scorned the government's budget proposals during its weekly meeting yesterday.

"It contradicts what the prime minister said [about no tax hikes]," said Labor leader Shimon Peres. He said Labor would "definitely vote against" the budget. "You can't cheat the economy. There are a lot of tricks and pretense going on here. It will bring about a recession... It's so easy to cut on paper without making any real cuts in effect," Peres said.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Korman's appeal against remand rejected

The Supreme Court rejected Nahum Korman's appeal against his remand yesterday. Korman, a security coordinator for the settlement of Betar, is charged with beating to death 11-year-old Hinni Shousha while chasing a group of stone-throwing youths. Justice Yitzhak Zamir said the alleged facts of the case create a presumption that Korman is dangerous, and, once someone is presumed dangerous, alternatives to arrest are not possible. Evelyn Gordon

### Isaac Stern made Diaspora Museum fellow

Violinist Isaac Stern was made an honorary fellow of the Diaspora Museum in Tel Aviv yesterday. The citation praised Stern as a musician and friend of Israel, and for the time he has devoted to training Israeli musicians. Philanthropist Sara Mayer, a long-time Diaspora Museum supporter, was also awarded an honorary fellowship. Helen Kaye

### Moshav family find 'alien,' store it in freezer

A family on Moshav Ahud in the western Galilee has frozen what it claims is an alien life form, after no local or government agency would come to examine it, police said. The family, who found the small "alien" in their barn, said they would keep it frozen in their home until it is examined by an expert. Itim

### PM to visit Pope next month

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu was quoted yesterday as saying he would meet Pope John Paul II at the Vatican next month. Netanyahu, who has not met the Pope since his election last May, said in an interview with Telepace, a Rome-based Catholic television station, that he had scheduled the meeting with the Pope two days ago.

"I will be in Rome at the end of January and on that occasion, naturally, I will visit the Pope and the Vatican," he said. The Vatican and Israel established full diplomatic ties two years ago. Both sides are still formally at odds over the status of Jerusalem. Last Thursday, the Pope and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat discussed the peace process in a meeting at the Vatican. Reuter

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**Fina, Claudine and Pinhas,  
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Thousands of senior citizens demonstrate outside the Knesset yesterday to protest the budget cuts, which will eliminate their discounts to parks and places of entertainment. 'The nation's senior citizens are concerned and anxious not only for the future of our pensions, but for daily means of existence,' said Gideon Ben-Yisrael, head of the senior citizens action committee. (Yitzhak Elitser)

### Petah Tikva religious schools taken to court over discrimination

EVELYN GORDON

TWO parents and an MK petitioned the High Court of Justice yesterday against alleged ethnic discrimination in the Petah Tikva state religious schools.

Two elementary schools, Yavne and Naot David, have divided all grades into two tracks - the Torah track and the science track. In the Torah-track classes, girls and boys learn separately, and the pupils get an extra seven to nine hours a week of classes in religious studies. Torah-track students must also pay an additional fee. In the science track, the classes are co-educational.

However, the petition charged that the two tracks are merely an excuse for separating Ashkenazim from Sephardim and new immigrants. Currently, the science track consists of 65 students, of whom three are new immigrants from the former Soviet Union, 15 are Ethiopian immigrants and the remainder are Sephardim, the petition said.

The petition noted the science-track classes are far smaller than the norm, furthering the impression that they were set up exclusively to weed out a few undesirable pupils. One first-grade science-track class, for instance, has only five pupils, and there are only seven pupils in one of the fifth-grade and one of the sixth-grade science classes.

When Esther and Nissim Haim decided to move their daughter into the Torah track, they were refused, even though they were willing to pay the fee, the petition said. The couple was asked to fill out a questionnaire about their religious practices, since the official reason for the two tracks is the pupils' different levels of religiosity, but were refused even though their answers were acceptable, the petition charged. The Haims, together with MK Ran Cohen (Meretz), petitioned the High Court against the entire separation system.

### Court: Gynecologist must stay in jail during rape trial

EVELYN GORDON

A GYNECOLOGIST charged with raping two of his patients should remain in jail, the Supreme Court ruled yesterday, overturning a district court's decision that house arrest would suffice.

Dr. Bogdan Dekel is accused of raping two patients, one in 1994 and one in 1996. One of the women gave birth as a result; the other, a minor, had an abortion. Dekel is on trial in the Haifa District Court, which put him under house arrest. The state appealed that decision, arguing he should be in jail.

The state argued that if Dekel were released, he would try to destroy evidence or intimidate witnesses. He has already tried to hide at least one medical file, the state

said. Furthermore, it said, he has tried several times to persuade the younger victim not to testify, telephoning her and one of her teachers.

Dekel's attorneys argued that since he is no longer practicing, he is not a danger to society and, even if he were, house arrest would solve the problem.

Justice Tova Strasberg-Cohen decided Dekel should remain in jail at least until the two victims finish testifying. After they finish, or in two months if they are not done by then, Dekel can petition the district court for his release, she said.

'The gravity of the acts attributed to the respondent cannot be exaggerated,' she added.

### Katsav seeks to lure Russian tourists

HAIM SHAPIRO

THEY used to come with shopping bags full of dollars. These days, tourists from Russia use credit cards, but they still spend money very freely.

The Russian tourist is sufficiently sought after that Tourism Minister Moshe Katsav said this week he intends to send a ministry representative to Russia, even at a time when the ministry has to cut back on its activities because of budget cuts. An aide said that one of the reasons for encouraging Russian tourism was that it was less affected by unrest in the area.

'The Russians are less influenced by what is shown on CNN,' said Moti Shilo, Katsav's press adviser.

During the first nine months of this year, ministry figures show that a total of 85,564 visitors from the CIS came to Israel, an increase of 6 percent over the same period last year. The figures for incoming tourism in general show that there were 2% fewer tourists.

The slump, according to the experts, was largely a result of a sharp drop after the bus bombings in March. In September, while incoming tourism was down 15% compared to the previous year, visitors from the CIS had decreased by only 1%.

'It is a very interesting market, close to Israel and with great potential,' said Ami Edgar, director

of the Association of Tour Agents.

He said some of the visitors from the former Soviet Union are relatively poor Christian pilgrims, but many others are very wealthy. Russian tourism in the winter to Eilat was already well-established, he said, and the flow of tourists fleeing from the Russian winter to the Dead Sea was also promising.

As lucrative as the Russian tourism market is today, it could easily be increased if the government were willing to take down some of the barriers it has put up in the face of Russian visitors. With suspicions that Russians want to come to work, it is hard for Russian tourists to get a visa.

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The Knesset's Internet site was launched yesterday at a ceremony attended by Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu. Initiated by Likud MK Michael Eitan and developed by a team of computer professionals and Knesset staffers, the site allows Internet users to bear live action from the plenum, listen to recordings of famous Knesset speeches, examine bills at various stages of the legislative process and send messages to MKs. Eitan said an effort would be made to get other government offices and databases on-line and accessible to the public. Though the bulk of the information appears in Hebrew, a Knesset tour and background information are presented in English, with more translations planned. The site's address is <http://www.knesset.gov.il> (Text: Judy Siegel; Photo: Isaac Harari)

# At least 8 killed in factory explosion near Houston

AN explosion blew a gaping hole through the roof of a metal-fabricating plant, killing at least eight people and leaving one worker missing, a federal official said yesterday. The blast happened late Sunday at the Wyman Gordon Forging Co., which employs about 1,200 people northwest of Houston in Harris County, fire and company officials said. Body parts were thrown as far as 100 meters outside the building, which had a 12-by-15-meter hole in its roof, said Erik Petocz, assistant chief of the Cypress-Fairbanks Volunteer Fire Department. He said workers were searching nearby fields for body parts and debris. Eight people were killed, two others were hospitalized and one was missing, said Roy Piggee, assistant area director for the Occupational Safety and Health

**JOAN THOMPSON HOUSTON**  
Administration in Houston. Company officials didn't know what caused the blast or how many people were working in the area, said Wallace Whitney, general counsel for Wyman Gordon at North Grafton, Massachusetts. Plant officials were kept out by fire marshals, he said, although no fire was reported. "That plant has an exemplary safety record," Whitney said. Several of the dead and injured were related to other workers, said longtime plant employee G.H. Bell, who arrived expecting to start work at 6 a.m. "Most of the employees that were killed were new hires. They were sons of older employees," Bell said. "I'm just fortunate that my son wasn't there." Karim Norred said one of the

dead was her son, Jody. "I had a man show up at my door and say there was a little problem at Wyman-Gordon, that there had been an explosion, and that my son was dead," she said. "I don't think my son was a little problem." The blast occurred near a 30,000-ton press in the plant, which produces extruded pipe used in power and chemical plants. "The press is run under high pressure and they really don't know what happened," said union official Leslie Schroeter. "The press wasn't in operation at the time of the explosion. A maintenance crew was working." Schroeter, special representative with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, said the plant had not had any fatal accidents before. "They take care of their safety problems real well," he said. (AP)

## Arabs petition for right to do national service

ARABS and Jewish men exempt from army service should be able to volunteer for national service and get the attendant financial benefits, a petition to the High Court of Justice said yesterday. The petition was filed by Vivian Khoury, a Christian Arab, Marwat Marizat, a Bedouin woman, Eyal Daniel, a Jewish man exempt from the army for health reasons, and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel. The petition stated that national service gives participants a feeling of satisfaction and of belonging to Israeli society. In addition, participants are eligible for financial benefits, such as larger mortgages and scholarship aid. Finally, people who have done army or national service are often given preference

**EVELYN GORDON**  
when applying for jobs or popular degree programs. About 18 months ago, the Fund for Absorbing Demobilized Soldiers decided, upon the recommendation of the Defense Ministry, that there was no reason not to accept either Arabs or Jews exempt from regular army duty into national service programs. Accordingly, a number of such people did become national service volunteers. A few months later, however, the National Insurance Institute - which is responsible for approving national service programs - decided to overturn this policy.

The petition charged that not permitting Arabs or Jews exempt from regular service to volunteer for national service constitutes illegal discrimination, especially given the financial implications of this refusal. Linking financial benefits to army service - when Arabs are not permitted to serve - is discriminatory, as it effectively ensures that only Jews get such benefits, the petition charged. However, the discriminatory character of this policy seems even more blatant when Arabs are not even allowed to volunteer for national service, the petition said. The rationale for the financial benefits has always been that those who do army service deserve compensation for those years, during which they are unable to work or study.

## Diamond ring makes its way to fiancée of Flight 800 victim

**LAUREN TERRAZZANO NEW YORK**  
FROM the moment it was found bobbing amid debris in the Atlantic until it was recently removed from an FBI vault in Calverton, N.Y., a diamond ring has remained an elusive token of love for a woman who lost everything one night in July. But yesterday, just two days before Christmas and 159 days after the TWA Flight 800 crash that claimed her fiancée's life, Julie Stuart will finally get to wear the engagement ring Andrew Kruger intended to slip on her finger last summer. FBI Assistant Director James Kallstrom was scheduled to meet with Stuart in Manhattan yesterday afternoon and hand over the 1.6-karat diamond. Stuart, of Bridgewater, Connecticut, said federal authorities called her last week to let her know that the ring would be released. "It's taken a long time. And at this point, it's more bitter than sweet," said Stuart, a 31-year-old human resources manager who met Kruger more than a year ago at the Connecticut company where they worked. "But the ring, it's what I have left of him." Until now, the diamond has been

known only as item 26 at the Calverton hangar that has become tragedy's own scrapbook, where twisted pieces of the Boeing 747 sit and valuable personal effects remain in a vault, waiting to be returned to families. The antique-style diamond, surrounded by two smaller stones and gold filigree, was in its original maroon silk box when it was plucked by divers from the Atlantic Ocean on July 18. The couple had picked it out together at a West Hartford, Connecticut jewelry store. Authorities said they could not release the ring until they were sure of its ownership. It was considered an "unassociated item," meaning that it was recovered without any identification linking it to a particular passenger among the 230 people on board, all of whom were killed. "But the fact that it was even found makes Stuart believe that it was a final message from Kruger, who had planned to meet her in Paris July 19 and make their

engagement official by presenting the diamond to her. Weeks after the disaster, she assumed that the ring was lost forever in the Atlantic. But when a friend in France sent her a copy of the August 1 issue of *Paris Match*, which featured some of the items recovered from the wreckage, she spotted it. "I thought, 'My God, it's the ring! My heart skipped,'" said Stuart. "For a moment I was hopeful." For Stuart and Kruger's family, who wanted her to have the engagement ring, the news marked the end of a long ordeal. The couple planned to marry July 12 in Bridgewater. Now, Stuart's goal is to simply get through the holidays. She says having the ring on her finger will make her feel closer to the man who, last year at this time, was buying her sweaters, bubble bath and champagne glasses. "They say you don't cry as much as time goes on and that you start to heal, but it's a long process," said Stuart. "It was his final wish, the ultimate symbol of our love," she said. "And when I get it, I'm not going to take it off." *Newsday*

## Judge: Buying testimony a 'dangerous precedent'

**RAINE MARCUS**  
THE question of "buying witnesses" arose again yesterday in Tel Aviv District Court, which heard a petition filed by security company owner David Spector. Spector, who provides security services for the daily *Ha'aretz*, requested that the court declare evidence bought by *Ma'ariv* publisher Ofer Nimrodi null and void. Nimrodi, currently on trial in the media wiretapping case, paid private investigator Ze'ev Laufer \$600,000, to testify against *Ma'ariv*'s rival, *Yedioth Aharonot*, implicating the latter in commissioning tapping. The moony, Spector wrote in his petition, was

paid without the full permission of *Ma'ariv* shareholders, of which he is a minor one. "The privatization of witnesses, that is the purchasing of testimonies by private parties, is a defect and is a dangerous precedent," Judge Sara Sirota said during the four-hour hearing. "Next we will hear of witnesses, who are not criminals, but who are scared to testify for whatever reason, being bought by individuals." But she also said that, contrary to Spector's speculations, there was nothing criminal about the payment given to Laufer by *Ma'ariv*.

## Concern over Kinneret's low water level

**DAVID RUDGE**  
CONCERN is growing over the low water level of the Kinneret, given the lower-than-average rainfall so far this winter. The water level is only 1.41 meters above the minimum mark. When it falls below this level, experts say, there is a risk the water quality will be irreparably harmed. The lake is more than 52 centimeters below the level it was at this time last year. Mekorot officials said the shortfall compared to the level of the lake last year amounts to over 100 million cubic meters of water. The water company is continuing to pump from the lake into the

National Water Carrier, but this may have to be stopped if there is no significant rainfall in the coming weeks, the officials said. The carrier transports water from the Kinneret to other parts of the country, primarily for domestic use, although some is still used for irrigation. The dearth of rainfall so far this winter has forced farmers to irrigate fields and orchards more than usual, placing a further drain on water resources. A committee of hydrological experts is to meet next month to decide how to best manage the nation's water resources.

## Margret Rey, co-creator of Curious George, dies at 90

**CAMBRIDGE, Massachusetts (AP)** - Margret E. Rey, half of the husband-and-wife team that created the "Curious George" children's books about the irascible monkey, has died at age 90. Rey died Saturday at her home in Cambridge after suffering a heart attack about three weeks ago, her publisher said. She and her husband, H.A. Rey, created the fictional monkey Curious George while living in

Paris in the 1930s. The couple escaped on bicycles with the unsold manuscript in 1940 before the German occupation. After Houghton Mifflin published "Curious George" in 1941, the Reys wrote six more books over 25 years, all about the trouble-prone monkey who wreaks havoc and has to be rescued or forgiven - or saves the day. Though both were artists, H.A. Rey illustrated the Curious George books while Margret Rey created the stories. After escaping Paris, the couple eventually made their way to New York. Almost as soon as they arrived, the Reys sold "Curious George" to Houghton Mifflin. "He became very much a figure of his own," she said in an interview with *The Associated Press* in April. "He

**STATE OF ISRAEL**  
Decorations Unit

**Award of Ribbons and Decorations to former Members of Underground Organizations, the Hagana, Etzel, Lehi, and other Groups**

In this period before the 50th anniversary of the founding of the State, we wish to draw the attention of former members of the underground organizations, the Hagana, Etzel, Lehi, people who were active in the illegal immigration and escape-from-Europe organizations, volunteers in the Mandate-period police and guarding organizations, and members of Gahal and Mahal, to the fact that we are continuing in award the ribbons and decorations noted below, to eligible persons who have not yet received them:

**Hagana Ribbon and State of Israel Fighter's Decoration**  
to everyone who was a member of the Hagana for at least six months, in the period between 1920 and the establishment of the State.

**Etzel Ribbon and State of Israel Fighter's Decoration**  
to everyone who was a member of Etzel for at least six months, in the period between 1937 and the establishment of the State.

**Lehi Ribbon and State of Israel Fighter's Decoration**  
to everyone who was a member of Lehi for at least six months, in the period between 1940 and the establishment of the State.

**Hamishmar Ribbon and State of Israel Fighter's Decoration**  
to all citizens and permanent residents who, before the founding of the State, performed full-time service of at least six months, in the Mandate police or guards service.

**State of Israel Fighter's Award**

to all who:

- were active in the illegal immigration or escape-from-Europe organizations, for a period of at least six months
- were recruited abroad for service in the Israel Defense Forces, through Gahal, or the Mahal volunteer organization, between February 1, 1948 and March 10, 1949.

**Prisoner of the Mandate Authorities Decoration**  
to persons who were detained or imprisoned by the British authorities, because of activities with or membership of one of the underground organizations or military or quasi-military organizations which took part in the struggle against the British authorities in Eretz Yisrael, in the period preceding the establishment of the State. The decoration will be awarded to all who were imprisoned for more than six months.

**Eligibility for Ribbons and Decorations**  
For a person who has died, an application to determine eligibility may be submitted by his/her nearest next of kin, in the following order: widower, widow, son, daughter, father, mother, brother, sister, grandson, granddaughter. Everyone who considers himself eligible for, and wishes to receive one of the above ribbons/decorations may fill in an application form, and send it to

**The Decorations Unit, Ministry of Defense, Hakiryia, Tel Aviv 61909**

The forms may be obtained from the Decorations Unit, 22 Rehov Ha'arba'a, Tel Aviv, where reception hours are 10 a.m. - 12 noon on Mondays, and 2 - 4 p.m. on Wednesdays. The forms will also be sent by mail, on receipt of a request in writing, sent to the Decorations Unit, Ministry of Defense, Hakiryia 61909, or by phone (03-6975671). When applying, state the activities, in respect of which the ribbon is requested, and the identity card number of the applicant.

**MINISTRY OF DEFENSE**  
Decorations Unit

**NAZI FIGHTER'S RIBBON**

We are continuing to award the Nazi Fighter's Ribbon to eligible persons who have not yet received it. The ribbon will be awarded to every Israeli citizen or permanent resident who can demonstrate that, during World War II he/she -

- Took part in the fight against the Nazis and the Axis powers, in the underground, in the ghettos, or with the partisans, in an organized revolt, or in the armed forces of the Allies.
- Volunteered in Eretz Yisrael to serve in the British forces, even if the person concerned has already received the Volunteer's Ribbon for this service.

A person who is eligible to receive the Nazi Fighter's Ribbon is also eligible for the State of Israel Fighter's Award (if he has not already received it) and for which he may submit an appropriate declaration. An application to establish the right to the ribbon may also be submitted on behalf of a person who has died, by the nearest next-of-kin, namely a widower, widow, son, daughter, father, mother, brother or sister, in that order. Anyone who considers himself eligible, and wishes to receive the ribbon should fill in an application form, which should be sent to:

**The Decorations Unit, Ministry of Defense, Hakiryia, Tel Aviv 61909**

The forms are obtainable from the Decorations Unit, 22 Rehov Ha'arba'a, Tel Aviv, which is open on Mondays, 10 a.m. - 12 noon, and on Wednesdays, 2 - 4 p.m. The forms can also be obtained by post, by writing to the Decorations Unit, Ministry of Defense, Hakiryia, Tel Aviv 61909, Tel. 03-697 5671.

In the submission, you should mention for what service the ribbon is requested, and the identity card number of the applicant.

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## UN decides not to send military force for Zaire

UNITED NATIONS (AP) - The United Nations will not send a military force to Zaire to help Rwandan refugees, the Security Council decided yesterday.

The council's decision was largely a formality, as participating countries had already agreed there was no longer a need for a multinational force to help refugees returning from eastern Zaire.

"In light of the new situation in the region, the functions of the multinational force will come to an end," said Security Council President Francesco Paolo Pulci of Italy.

About 940,000 of the estimated 1.2 million refugees who fled Rwanda in 1994 following the massacre of at least 500,000 Tutsis have returned in the last two months, from Zaire and Tanzania.

UN refugee agency officials said between 20,000 and 30,000 a day were expected to arrive from Tanzania until the end of the year.

In opting against the military mission, the council followed the recommendations of Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who submitted a report to the council late last week.

In the report, Boutros-Ghali nevertheless called for continued attention to the humanitarian needs in Rwanda.

"The humanitarian crisis created by the various conflicts is itself far from being resolved," he said. "Urgent attention must now be devoted to the social, economic and political integration of these returnees."

Generally, he noted, the refugees have been well-treated, but "internal conflicts persist."

The government is holding more than 86,000 people in overcrowded jails, most without legal arrest orders. The first trials of genocide suspects are scheduled to begin December 30.

Folci said it may be time for a peace conference between the warring parties from the Rwandan conflict, which was touched off when Hutus began their orchestrated massacre, mainly of Tutsis.

The United Nations is also considering a permanent envoy for the region.

Canada was leading the humanitarian mission, which included about a dozen countries. Lt.-Gen. Maurice Baril, commander of the international relief force, said earlier this month the situation in eastern Zaire "has changed on the ground" so much that there was little need for the relief operation.

# Peruvian terrorists keep 140 hostages

LIMA (Reuters) - Ignoring pleas from around the world, defiant Marxist rebels vowed to keep more than 140 hostages at the Japanese ambassador's residence over Christmas unless Peru's government meets their demands.

The heavily armed Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) guerrillas set free most of their captives Sunday night in an emotional 225-person mass exit that included all the US, British and German prisoners.

But the rebels said in a statement read prior to the exodus that they would not release high-ranking Peruvian government officials or Japanese VIPs until demands for the release of jailed guerrilla comrades were met.

The Japanese still held as bargaining chips in the embassy residence include top local managers of big Japanese companies and the host of the ill-fated diplomatic reception stormed by the rebels last Tuesday, Ambassador Morihisa Aoki.

Reflecting the grief felt in Japan, Emperor Akihito cancelled all official celebrations of his birthday yesterday and Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto tracked the crisis from a special war-room in the Foreign Ministry fitted out with television monitors.

As families of the released hostages celebrated in Lima, President Bill Clinton called for the immediate release of those still held. Pope John Paul II had earlier added his voice to the appeals.

Peruvian leader Alberto Fujimori has so far refused all of the MRTA's demands and has cut off water and electricity to the residence - something released hostages say is endangering the health and safety of those still inside.



Japanese hostages leave their ambassador's residence in Lima late Sunday night after their release by Tupac Amaru rebels. The guerrillas released 225 hostages but still hold 140.

"It is extremely important that water is restored," released hostage Victor Lucero, a physician, told local television. "Water is indispensable. Without it, the situation is very dangerous." He said captives had developed at least eight cases of conjunctivitis

because of the foul conditions. The MRTA statement also warned the government that "if Mr. Fujimori decides on a military solution he will always find a Tupac Amaru member vigilant." Police, who have prepared commands to storm the residence as a

last resort if talks fail, say the guerrillas include four sharpshooters at strategic windows armed with rifles with night-vision telescopic sights. Reinforcing the rebel threat, a red-and-white Peruvian flag, decorated with a gun, a hammer, and

the head of Tupac Amaru - an Indian leader who led a 18th century uprising against Spanish conquerors before being captured and torn limb from limb by horses - hung provocatively from a residence window yesterday. About 900 policemen surrounded

ed the residence yesterday, the same number who have kept guard throughout the crisis.

Led by former textile factory worker turned revolutionary Nestor Cerpa Cartolini, the mostly young, muscular rebels stormed from jungle obscurity onto the world's front pages with their surprise assault last Tuesday night.

Although police describe Cerpa as a "vicious terrorist" with a long history of bloody attacks, the rebels appear to have treated their captives well and tried to present an image of concerned social crusaders that belies their violent tactics. They said they had released most of their captives for humanitarian reasons before Christmas.

In tumultuous scenes late Sunday, the released men filed out to the cheers and applause of more than a thousand waiting relatives, journalists and officials. Looking tired but elated to be out after five days of captivity, the men waved to cameras and made victory signs before being whisked away in five buses to a police hospital for routine medical checks.

Those released included the ambassadors of Bolivia, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Venezuela and Cuba, as well as diplomats from Bolivia, the European Union, the United Nations, Britain, Spain, Germany and seven US officials.

"Daddy, Daddy," shouted one young Asian girl perched on a man's shoulder as she finally recognized her father in one of the buses. Others wept or cried out in joy.

Fujimori, himself the son of Japanese immigrants, greeted the freed captives but left without a word to reporters. His brother, Pedro Fujimori, was still being held hostage.

## Yeltsin returns to Kremlin after six months on the sidelines

MOSCOW (AP) - Russian President Boris Yeltsin emerged from his black stretch Mercedes, adjusted his fur hat and with a broad smile said "Zdravstvuyte" (Hello) to aides welcoming him back to the Kremlin yesterday.

Six months after heart trouble largely put him out of action, Yeltsin returned to his office declaring his eagerness to take on Russia's worsening economic woes.

"I'm in good spirits, I'm feeling good and I'm ready for battle," he said before walking up the steps and into the building.

Noticeably slimmer, Yeltsin seemed more alert and his breathing less labored than before quintuple bypass surgery on November 5 that repaired his heart.

While Yeltsin has remained in charge throughout his illness, his return to the Kremlin effectively marked the start of his second term. He had a heart attack just days before his July 3 re-election victory and since then has made only rare public appearances.

Doctors say the 65-year-old president is making a full recovery and should be able to maintain a normal work schedule.

One of his first actions yesterday was to meet with his chief of staff,

Anatoly Chubais, and other presidential aides.

Yeltsin told them he was satisfied with his administration's performance during his absence but that they now have a lot of work ahead of them, his spokesman Sergei Yastrebemsky said.

The Russian leader has grown impatient with convalescence, and with the government's failure to resolve a growing economic and social crisis. Millions of workers go unpaid for months as the economy continues to shrink and taxes go uncollected.

"There's no time to waste," Yeltsin said in a television address Friday.

Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov wasted no time in attacking his arch-foe, telling a news conference that Yeltsin was still unfit to rule.

"Even when he was healthy and sober he couldn't come up with an answer to any of the issues facing Russia," said Zyuganov, whom Yeltsin defeated in the presidential race.

Yeltsin spoke by telephone with British Prime Minister John Major. They agreed that Major should visit Moscow but did not set a date.

## Tensions rise in Belgrade as police arrive ahead of rival rallies

FEARS of clashes grew yesterday as Slobodan Milosevic called for a huge rally in his support on the same square where opposition groups have protested his autocratic rule for the past month.

Foes of the Serbian president warned it could provoke a civil war.

Hundreds of riot police were bused to the capital a day before the planned pro-Milosevic rally, intended to counter a month-long pro-democracy protest against the annulment of opposition election victories.

About 80,000 pro-democracy supporters defied heavy rains to demonstrate in Belgrade for the 34th straight day in protests that have marked the biggest challenge to Milosevic since he came to power nine years ago.

Their leaders vowed to continue the marches, but warned Milosevic might use his forces to instigate violence that could prompt a crackdown just when world attention is focused on the Christmas holidays.

"Tomorrow, Milosevic will have a chance to show if he means well for his country and people," said Zoran Djindjic a leader of the opposi-

tion coalition Zajedno, or Together. To provoke clashes would be "sheer madness," he said.

A conflict between pro- and anti-Milosevic protesters would give Serbia's president an excuse to ban all demonstrations and use force against his opponents whose protests so far have been peaceful.

Zajedno charged in a statement that Milosevic would try to provoke clashes by disguising policemen as his civilian supporters, who would intervene against pro-democracy demonstrators.

The state-run Tanjug news agency, announcing the pro-Milosevic rally in Belgrade, said all those who are "for peace, freedom, independent Serbia and against terrorism and foreign rule" should come to a central square at 3 p.m. today.

Opposition protests take place at the same time and place.

Several small pro-Milosevic rallies were held in Serbia yesterday, including one in the

volatile Kosovo province where Milosevic rose to power in 1987. About 1,000 Serbs in this overwhelmingly ethnic Albanian province accused the opposition leaders of selling out the region to the Albanians.

In Kraljevo, a central Serbian town, a cordon of police prevented pro- and anti-Milosevic groups from attacking each other. They traded insults and jeers, however.

Over 50,000 opposition supporters gathered in the second-largest town of Nis. In Pozarevac, Milosevic's hometown, police for the first time prevented an opposition protest march, but there were no incidents.

Independent Belgrade newspapers said yesterday that Milosevic planned to transport up to 400,000 supporters from outside Belgrade to the rally. On average, 100,000 Belgraders have taken part in the daily anti-Milosevic protests.

About 600 riot police were bused into Belgrade yesterday and deployed on the outskirts of the capital where a huge force, including armored anti-riot vehicles, has been stationed since the opposition protests started.

**Hold the Big Mac! McDonald's cooks up new menu**

OAK BROOK, Illinois (AP) - With its own research showing its burgers aren't as tasty as the competition, McDonald's is making some changes.

The Wall Street Journal reported yesterday that McDonald's is ordering modifications - including less salt in ketchup and improved sauce for the Big Mac - after finding its burgers rated behind Wendy's and Burger King.

Other changes include making sure burgers aren't overcooked and doing away with the practice of placing lettuce and tomato in the microwave along with Arch Deluxe. In the future, the garnishes will be added after heating.

The newspaper said the changes were outlined in a memo earlier this month to franchisees, and they come as management seeks to boost sales at US stores. McDonald's doesn't release figures, but analysts say they have been flat or lower for most of the year.

The memo's author, chief operating officer Thomas Glasgow Jr., noted the company listened to franchisees' concerns about the food.

"Now we want to move - FAST," he wrote, according to the Journal.

McDonald's will forego traditionally lengthy testing in order to satisfy as many customers as possible, the memo said.

Company officials weren't immediately available for comment yesterday. The Journal said a spokesman declined to comment on the change, other than to say the company always evaluates menu and cooking procedures.

**TENDERS**

israel electric חברת החשמל

The Israel Electric Corporation wishes to purchase the following goods:

TENDER	DESCRIPTION	COST OF TENDER DOCUMENTS, inc. vat (non-returnable)
578675	Miscellaneous Electrical Material for Electrical Installations at Ramat Hovav Power Station - Units 3 & 4 Stage A - Submission of technical/commercial details, without prices	NIS 351
Last date for submitting proposals: February 2, 1997, at 11 a.m.		
582969	Busbar and Breaker Failure Protection for Substations Stage A - Submission of technical/commercial details, without prices	NIS 2925
Last date for submitting proposals: February 17, 1997, at 1 p.m.		

The tender documents may be obtained, Sunday - Thursday, at the Market Research and Tenders Dept., 11 Sderot Pal-Yam, Haifa, between 9 a.m. and 12 noon, on submission of a receipt, demonstrating payment (non-returnable) of the cost of the documents, into the Corporation's account at the Postal Bank. Payment slips for making such payments are obtainable at the above address (Tel. 04-8615455/4).

Before purchasing the tender documents, they may be perused on Sunday - Thursday, 9 a.m. - 12 noon, at the offices of the Market Research and Tenders Dept. at the above address. Bids should be submitted in a sealed envelope, and be placed in Tenders Box No. 1, in room 701, 7th floor, in the Pal-Yam building, Haifa (address as above) by the last date for submitting bids, as stated above.

No undertaking is given to accept the lowest or any bid.

NOTE: In appropriate cases, the Electric Corporation will give preference to suppliers, in accordance with the Tenders Regulations (Preference for Locally Produced Goods, and Obligation to Extend Commercial Cooperation).

The Electric Corporation retains the right to negotiate, where this is legally permissible.

**TENDERS**

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The Israel Electric Corporation wishes to purchase the following goods/services:

TENDER	DESCRIPTION	Cost of tender documents, inc. VAT (non-returnable)
578684	Supply of Polyester Cabinets Stage A - Submission of technical/commercial details, without prices The period of the contract is two years; the obligations and rights entailed will be as agreed. Options: The Israel Electric Corporation will have the option of extending the contract for one year, on the same terms, at the Corporation's discretion. This option may be exercised, at any time in the contract period. Special Conditions: 1. The bidder must provide one complete cabinet, of every type he offers. 2. Bidders must have an ISO 9002 certificate. 3. All data listed in the specification must be provided.	NIS1989
Last date for submitting proposals: January 26, 1997, at 11 a.m.		
580600	Feet and Stabilizing Crosses for Steel Poles	NIS936
Last date for submitting proposals: February 2, 1997, at 11 a.m.		

CONDITIONS APPLYING TO THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS (in addition to those stated above):  
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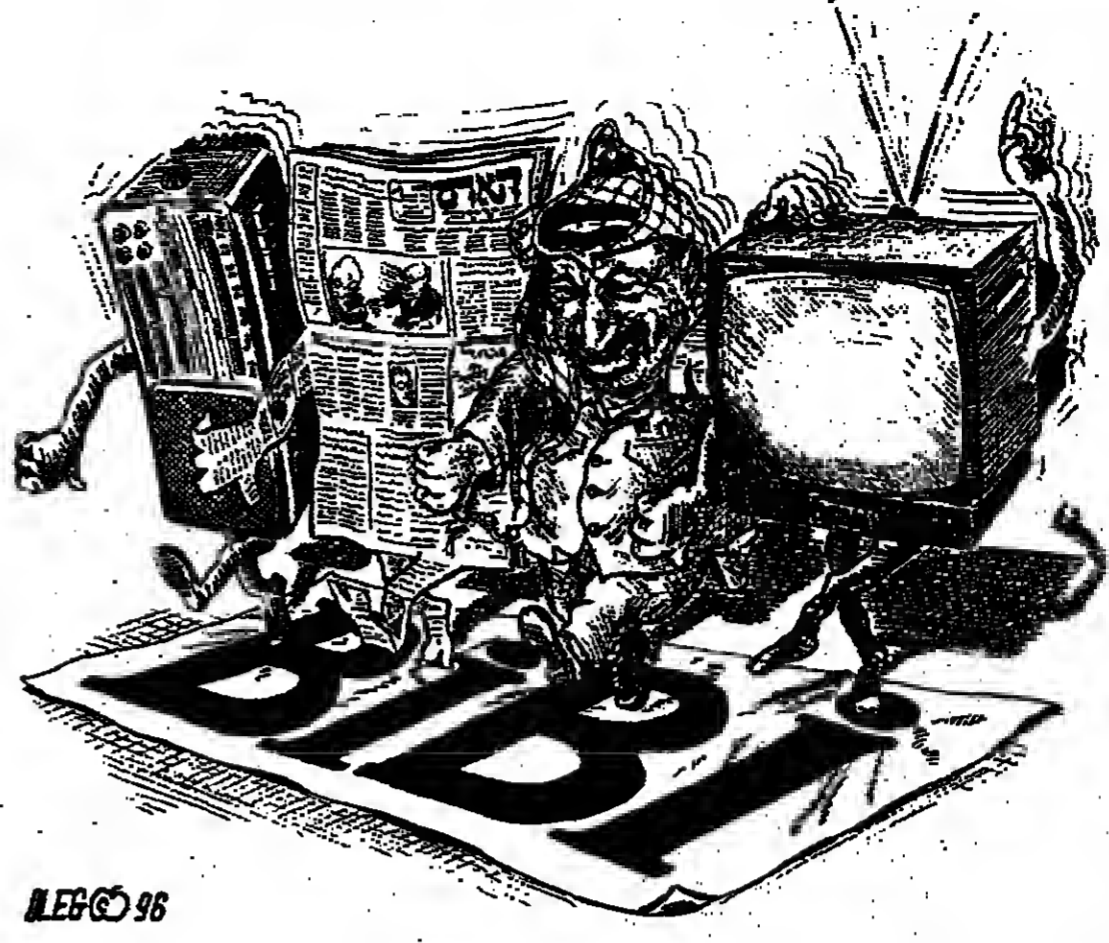
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The rising misery index

FOREIGN Minister David Levy may receive a hero's welcome in Beit She'an following his victories in the Knesset Finance Committee on Sunday. But if his supporters ever realize what he has done to them, they may run him out of town. The changes the so-called "social lobby" made to the government's budget make it worse for the weaker classes of society, not better. Instead of reducing child allowances for middle- and upper-income families, the committee raised taxes - from 15 percent to 20 percent - on people making as little as NIS 1,640 to NIS 3,280 per month. Indeed, taxes were raised across the board by eliminating indexing for all of 1997 and, starting in 1998, adjusting tax rates for inflation only once a year instead of three times. The tax on gasoline, which is a regressive one like all sales taxes, will also go up. One might think, judging from the behavior of the "social lobby", that the government wanted to cut the budget because it enjoys hurting people. In fact, it is not clear that even the cuts decided upon will be enough to spur economic growth, curb the trade deficit, and keep inflation down. In the campaign leading up to the victory of Ronald Reagan over president Jimmy Carter in 1980, the term "misery index" was coined. The misery index was measured by adding the unemployment and inflation rates. The direct result of the failure to cut the budget sufficiently will be a rise in Israel's misery index. The people who are made most miserable by a high misery index are the very people the "social lobby" claims to champion. So the good people of Beit She'an, like the rest of us, could see taxes, unemployment and prices all go up. Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu claims that he has stood by his word not to raise taxes. This is a statement that needs a fair amount of explanation to be understood. The Finance Ministry estimates that the changes in tax indexation alone will net about NIS 850 million. In fact, out of the almost NIS 7 billion in budget "cuts", NIS 2 to 3 billion will be in tax hikes, of one kind or another. It's a far cry from the Thatcherite revolution that Netanyahu claims to be launching. The budget emerging from the Knesset Finance Committee could have been prepared by David Levy. Even before it became so bent out of shape as to be hardly recognizable, the budget did not represent any fundamental reordering of government priorities. This is not a reform budget, but a middle-

towards-preventing-disaster budget. If the government could not stand up to the "social lobby" and the industrialists (who blocked a cut in investment grants) over this budget, it is hard to see how it will have the political gumption to really transform the economy. The fights ahead, over privatization and real structural budget cuts, are not for the faint-hearted. The debate over what is really best for poor and middle class Israelis, shrinking government or making it more bloated, cannot be avoided. Finance Minister Dan Meridor said in an interview published yesterday in Ha'aretz that he is "the chairman of the social lobby. I make sure that the weak will not be hurt. I just do it the correct way from an economic standpoint." Meridor is right, but the true test of the government's "chairmanship" is not only being right but standing up to David Levy. Why should the government let Levy get away with the claim that he, not they, is doing what is best for the weaker sectors? Either the budget is socially responsible or it is not. If it is, the government should take its case directly to the development towns and debate who really is fighting for the interests of the lower and middle classes. The government needs to get on the road and bring its case to the people. Last-minute speeches on television, such as Netanyahu and Meridor's joint appearance before the first Knesset vote, are a step in the right direction, but are not nearly enough. Israel is rightly proud of the vigor of its democratic processes, but when it comes to the relationship between the government and the people, attitudes tend to be decidedly paternalistic. This can and should change. The economic debate cannot remain within the walls of the Knesset, while the rest of the country deals with the results. Netanyahu is sometimes accused of bringing an American style of politics to Israel. This may not be welcome when it comes to shallow, polished media campaigns. But Israel could benefit from an American-style impulse to build policies not just on political power but "grassroots" popular support. Democratizing the economic debate is necessary to achieve economic reform in Israel; it is also a worthy goal in its own right. At first it might not be considered "normal" for government ministers to fan out across the country to bring their case to the people. Fundamental change of the sort the government is trying to accomplish demands, however, a willingness to depart from politics as usual.

OPINION



Christians, Jews and Israel

UNLIKE in other parts of the world, one barely feels Christmas in Israel. The only way we feel the onrush of the Christmas season is by the Christian tourists who flood the country at this time of year. They visit here "come hell or high water"; that is, "come Scud missiles or suicide bombings." If only that were the case... with Orthodox Jews. It seems that there is a direct correlation between the intense theological belief in Israel that Orthodox Jews hold and the devout spiritual attachments to Israel that many Christians have. During the Gulf war, American Jews bailed out en masse. From New England alone, some 25 non-Orthodox Jewish tour groups to Israel canceled their trips here. Not one Christian group canceled its visit. Yeshiva University filled a chartered plane with 450 of its students to come here to identify with Israel. SO WHERE is the involvement of the non-Orthodox American Jewish community in Israel? We see it most dramatically in that community's legitimate protest to any changes in the Law of Return that would affect the status of non-Orthodox conversions to Judaism. But their opposition to such changes seems to be reflected only in verbal posturing. When it comes to grass-roots work in Israel, the majority of the American Jewish community which raises the banner of religious freedom is dwarfed by the commitment, in both financial and human terms, of its Orthodox counterparts. For example, Habad rushes to

DAVID FORMAN help Russian immigrants, many whose Judaism is in doubt. They raise \$40 million to buy up lands in the territories, thus furthering their ideological interests in Israel. By comparison, non-Orthodox religious movements, human rights groups, peace organizations in Israel - all of whom reflect the ideological views of the majority of American Jews - go begging for money. Proclamations by the non-Orthodox American Jewish community about Israel's settlement policy, religious pluralism and economic justice lose credibility when meaningful support is lacking. But financial aid is no more important in the overall impact upon Israeli society than is the human contribution. This human factor relates to two areas; aliyah and tourism. There is virtually no aliyah from the United States. What little there is comes from the Orthodox community, which dwarfs the non-Orthodox Diaspora Jewish community in relative and absolute terms.

(After all, Orthodox Jews make up only 18% of the American Jewish community.) In terms of tourism: one indication of trouble brewing in the Middle East, and non-Orthodox American Jews run for cover. One can only conclude that there is a direct relationship between genuine religious fervor and the ideological role that Israel plays in the minds of those who possess such a powerful divine trust. The secular Jewish community in America does not possess this theological will. The question is whether it holds any historical and/or sentimental attachments to Israel. As for non-Orthodox religious Jews in America, one would expect that their authenticity as self-defined religious Jews would stem from the theological role that Israel plays in their lives. But this does not seem to be the case. While the religious right in Israel, both Christian and Jewish, enjoys support from its counterparts in America, we liberal folks are left on our own. So we will just have to adjust to a new reality: that even with a threat of a renewed intifada, katyushas, killings in Beit El, and possible war with Syria, this Christmas season will still bring out Christian tourists; and the long winter holidays in America will still bring out American Orthodox Jews. These two segments of the American community may be the only true Diaspora believers in Israel. The writer is a free-lance writer living in Jerusalem.

Trust & Tactics

REUVEN HAMMER THERE may have been a time when Israel's rabbinic was interested in acting in an enlightened manner and could be trusted with difficult and delicate social problems. That time is long past. In this day and age, it is inconceivable that Israel should be increasing the power of the rabbinical courts. Is it not bad enough that they control marriage and divorce? Should they now have a monopoly on conversions done in Israel, too? This is just what a proposed law aims to confer. Why - aside from coalition politics - should anyone want to increase their power? The acute problem of conversions should concern all Israelis. Aside from those who wish to convert and cannot because of the blindness of the Chief Rabbinate and its stubborn insistence on the most stringent interpretations of Jewish law, two major groups are affected: immigrants from the former Soviet Union and parents of adopted children. We are talking about tens of thousands of people whose lack of Jewish status threatens to cause overwhelming social problems. If spouses of Jews, and children and grandchildren of Jews cannot convert, we are perpetuating an intolerable situation. No one is forcing these people into Judaism. They are coming willingly, wanting to identify with the Jewish people and its traditions, and our religious establishment is driving them away. Minister Natan Sharansky has said that he wants to give the rabbinic a chance to solve this problem, and he believes it when it says it will do so. How long is he willing to wait? With years to

Giving away our freedoms to the rabbinical courts is something any rational society would avoid like the plague

prove itself, all the rabbinic has shown is how stubborn it is, how unwilling to confront the needs of the day. Adopted children are another major problem. Unless converted before coming to Israel, they cannot be registered as Jews. The rabbinic here refuses to convert them unless the family adheres to the most rigid standards of observance. In effect the government is creating a situation whereby only the Orthodox can adopt. The rabbinical court of the Masorti Movement converts more than 100 people each year and would be converting hundreds more were our conversions registered in the Interior Ministry. It is a crime to allow political machinations to prevent this.

THE government should know that US Jewry - at whom its brilliant move is clearly also aimed - is not that gullible. I recently spent several months in the US meeting rabbis, leaders and laypeople of the Conservative Movement there. Their concern has never been exclusively conversions performed in America but the rights of the Masorti Movement here and the status of religious freedom in Israel. They are concerned as Jews - and not as Americans - at what they see as a further erosion of democratic values and religious freedom for all Jews in Israel. As one who tries to promote love and support of Israel - yes, even aliyah - among American Jews, I have found that task harder and harder, as politics and religion become ever more entwined. This latest tactic will certainly not help. It is impossible to address a Conservative audience about Israel without being asked about this issue. And it is well-nigh impossible to justify our government's action when it is so obviously giving in to the demands of a minority against the interests of the majority, and indeed against the good of the State and the future of Judaism. The more power given to the rabbinic, the more coercive laws get enacted, the less Israel's secular population will look positively at Jewish tradition and attempt to create the synthesis we so badly need between Judaism and democracy. Giving away our freedoms to the rabbinical courts is an act of suicide that any rational society or government would avoid like the plague. The writer is head of the rabbinic court for conversions of the Rabbinical Assembly of Israel.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ENTRENCHED WEAKER CLASSES Sir, - In his article of December 13, Yosef Goell grills the newly elected prime minister for not being Robin Hood. The big question is: "Do we need another one?" For decades our country was "privileged" to have successive Robin Hood governments bravely robbing the rich, giving the proceeds to the poor, and, in the process, not forgetting themselves, relatives and friends. The East European socialists introduced the young nation to a maddening mixture of Bolshevism, Peronism, and Zionism. At least we can say that the "Zionist" part worked - that is, we are still here. The continuous care of the "weaker classes" of our society in effect stimulated the development of such "weaker classes." The next logical step became a "Brooklynization" of Israeli society where children of the fast-growing "weaker class" parents inherit, like obesity, the "gimme" mentality. The "Robin Hood" taxation policies continue to drive Israeli manufacturing enterprises either toward bankruptcy or to the manufacturing-friendly Far East, and Israeli finance to the offshore tax havens. Can society remain healthy while half of its members enjoy their tenure by nonstop talking and drinking coffee, while the other half is working hard trying to sell to one another life insurance policies? If the unholy Geshet-Labor-Meretz-Hadasb-Shas alliance busts the budget, would not this result in a further proliferation of the "weaker classes"? Should not the attempt be made to break this vicious cycle by introducing a healthy portion of Reaganism-Thatcherism? And will the well-meaning prime minister's attempt be squashed by a bulldozer of the entrenched mentality - "it is not what I can do for my country, it is what my country can do for me." BORIS VOLFSOON Haifa.

HUMAN DIGNITY Sir, - I am disgusted by a roadside billboard located all over Israel, which feature a Native American wearing a headdress and an extremely large Visa card covering half of his face. This is a truly awful display of insensitivity at the least. I am surprised at how the billboards could have been raised throughout the country and remain standing for months now without a response from the Israeli public. Over 15 million Native Americans have died from war or introduced disease over the past few hundred years, on top of the fact that the ways of life of all the Native nations have themselves been all but erased from the continent on which they once thrived. By and large, this genocide has taken place because they have been perceived as obstacles to European, American and Canadian economic conquest. Rights to sacred places are still being taken away by the American and Canadian governments in order for logging and mining interests to increase profits. The grim expression on the face of the Native American, hidden behind the unmistakable symbol of wealth, is eerily ironic. Visa has unlimited advertising techniques at its disposal, but it appears clear that lessons of human dignity and respect still need to be learned by modern agents of economic power and prestige. KEVIN AARON Kibbutz Kezura.

AMERICAN FUTURE FOREIGN POLICY Sir, - Barry Rubin's analysis of American future foreign policy vis-a-vis the "peace process" (November 15) is solid, but lacking on two counts: (1) intervention by the Clinton Administration into the Israeli election was blatant and quite open in its support for Labor and Peres (It was trumpeted in the American Jewish community by supporters of Labor); and (2) the Clinton Administration will be constrained from being anti-Israeli because of the Al Gore factor (a vice-president who hopes to inherit the electoral politics). It may even emerge that a third factor will come into play - Clinton's shift to the "center" means a return to the pro-Israel orientation of the Democratic Leadership Council (Al Gore's moorings as well as that of the neo-conservative Democrats). I think Barry Rubin's contrary prospects would only have had short-term possibilities if Clinton had chosen a liberal-secular secretary of state (a 1960s product currently present in his administration in other capacities but clearly at odds with Al Gore's needs and expectations). BERNARD SCHECHTERMAN, Professor, International Relations, Foreign Policy and Middle East Affairs, University of Miami Coral Gables, Florida.

HUMAN SENSITIVITY Sir, - In contrast to many other reporters, Sarah Honig has done a consistently outstanding job of reporting on political events in an objective manner. Now, in her opinion article concerning the response of the world media and the diplomatic corps to the murder of a mother and her child by Arab terrorists (December 13), she has put into words the feelings of many Israelis. She is to be complimented for her ability to maintain the proper balance between a reporter's professional objectivity and human sensitivity. JAY SHAPIRO Givat Shmiron.

IMPORTANT DATE Sir, - The Jerusalem Post of November 29 completely ignored the historic significance of this date. Kaf-Tet be-November and Independence Day signify the culmination of the Zionist undertaking. Especially the Post, which is read by new immigrants, diplomats and foreigners all over the world, should pay more attention to our history. FRED SIMONS Ra'anana.

'Judaizing Jerusalem' A.M. ROSENTHAL "Judaization." Those who use the word should say it more plainly: the Jewing of Jerusalem. I asked a colleague the word that sprang to mind when he heard Judaization. "Hymietown," he said. For me, it recalls the antonym - Judenrein. Arabs are familiar with that. It is what they accomplished when Jordan occupied the West Bank from 1948 to 1967 - all Jews out. EIGHT former secretaries of state and national security advisers in a letter to Israel, endorsed quickly by President Clinton, warned Israel against "unilateral" action - meaning increasing settlements on the West Bank or anywhere. They certainly do not talk of Judaization. But the warning is that more settlers could destroy peace. This amounts to advance justification of any Palestinian attack against settlers on the grounds, true or false, that they were newcomers. Two signers told me the statement was drafted at least three weeks earlier, held up so as not to jeopardize the Hebron talks. It was released after Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu made remarks they thought meant more settlers. (Courtesy of the New York Times)



Clockwise from top left: Tasmin Archer, Meir Banai, R.E.M., Bruce Springsteen, The Beatles, Rami Kleinstein (photo of Kleinstein by Yoram Boazglo)

## Best and worst of '96

**T**HE highlights of 1996 were not as high as in some previous years, but there is still great rock 'n' roll being made years after it was declared dead. I have no illusions that I've listened to even a tenth of the music released this year, but from the couple of hundred discs that have crossed my path, here are some that stood out for better or worse.

### Best Debut

**Kc' - I AM [ ]**  
An expertly crafted singer-songwriter effort by someone who

### IN TUNE

DAVID BRINN

writes and performs like a seasoned veteran.

### Best singles

Tasmin Archer - "One More Good Night with the Boys"  
Me'shell Ndegeocello - "Free My Heart"  
Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers - "Walls"  
Weezer - "Pink Triangle"

### Worst single

Spice Girls - "Wannabe"

### Best compilation

Sweet Relief II - *The Songs of Vic Chesnut*

### Best Israeli albums

Meir Banai - *Wandering Tune*  
Wild Weed - *Wild Weed*  
Rami Kleinstein - *Collection*

### Comeback of the Year

The Beatles

### Best Albums

Sleeper - *The Li Girl*  
Bruce Springsteen - *The Ghost of Tom Joad*  
Pearl Jam - *No Code*  
REM - *New Adventures in Hi-Fi*  
Paul Westerberg - *Eventually*  
Rolling Stones - *Rock and Roll Circus*  
Slunk Anasnie - *Snooth*  
The Lemonheads - *Car Button Cloth*

### Worst Album

Prince - *Emancipation*

**Most fun local musical events**  
Grateful Dead video night at the Tel Aviv Cinematheque. The next best thing to being at the real thing.  
Reggae Festival at Achziv Beach. Pack up your troubles and smile.

TOWER RECORDS' TOP 15				
THIS LAST WEEKS ON				
WEEK	WEEK	CHARTS	ARTIST	TITLE
#1	3	5	EHUD BANAI	OD MEAT
#2	4	4	TONI BRAXTON	SECRETS
#3	12	6	ENIGMA	LE ROI EST MORT
#4	12	6	OST	EVITA
#5	2	6	SPICE GIRLS	COLLECTION
#6	5	17	RAMI KLEINSTEIN	TRAGIC KINGDOM
#7	15	2	NO DOUBT	TANGO
#8	20	4	JULIO IGLESIAS	BEST DISCO IN TOWN 2
#9	NEW1	1	V/A	SPIRIT OF THE WORLD
#10	8	5	V/A	BEST OF SHNAIM
#11	9	5	VAYA CON DIOS	FOR WAR CHILD
#12	10	40	SHLOMO ARTZI	COLLECTION
#13	19	2	PAVAROTTI & FRIENDS	OLDER
#14	6	39	RITA	
#15	16	33	GEORGE MICHAEL	

Tower Records' top-selling albums for last week



## Treat for the eyes

THEATER REVIEW  
NAOMI DOUDAI

**O**desa Tales, adapted for the stage from Isaac Babel's short stories and directed by Yehonay Arye, Hebrav, Nili Mirsky and Mark Iwanir. Set: Alexander Ljivinsky. Costumes: Anna Kruscheva. Lighting: Bueno Avi Yonah (Bambi). Music: Avi Binyamin. Hebrew title, *Et At the Geshet Theater, Jaffa Port.*

**W**ITH a director of unceasing creative ingenuity and fertility, and a team of performers whose artistic skills and talents outshine those of almost all other Israeli players, a Geshet production is almost always refreshing and rewarding. It is always and forever total theater.

As far as mise en scene and presentation are concerned, *Odessa Tales* is no exception. An innovative technique of transferring storytelling to staged realization brings Babel to life for us. A set that consists of criss-crossing rails on which symbolic images from the tales dart across the stage on trolleys, is a telling transposition from literature to theater.

Actors like Boris Achanov, Yevgey Gamburg, Natalya Voinovitch-Manor (her serving-girl Irina, a real bombshell), Leonid Kanievsky, Roland Heilovsky, are a treat for present-day stage-scared eyes. They are now joined by a number of young Israeli-born actors, three of whom - Dror Keren, Amnon Wolf, Efi Ben-Tzur - here do their Russian mentors proud. The ongoing Israelification of the company is palpable too in the improvement in the spoken Hebrew of the Russian-born actors.

Cameri, Tel Aviv in an inter-cultural exchange with that theater. Hebrew title, *Hamispat shel Schamgorod.*

**A** RECIPIENT of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986, it goes without saying that Elio Wiesel is a provocative personality, a powerful writer with a fascinating mind and interesting ideas. A competent playwright, however, he emphatically is not.

In other words, *The Schamgorod Trial* is not theater. It is literature - of the most polemic, pontificating sort. Arid intellectuals apart, the three hours during which we had to endure the endless discussion, speculation, celebration, on the subject of evil, love and the nature of God, was pure punishment to a captive audience that snuck it out probably out of politeness or because they had paid dearly for their tickets.

Without a play proper, this production was a mission impossible. But if nonetheless the former East German company (six actors and a stage populated by masses of empty chairs) came here confident that the material - a drama of pogroms - would suit Israeli audiences, their performance failed to back up their obviously good intentions. Together with the writer, the director as well as the actors failed to prove themselves possessed of any recognizable professional stage penchant.

It is little short of scandalous that the Cameri, advised in advance of the questionably theatrical quality of the material, did not think to spare a largely Alte Yekkeledand audience, many of them probably veteran readers of this paper, the cultural distress and disappointment, not to mention expense of so grueling an evening.

This could have been avoided by presenting the production as an evening of dramatized discussion, which it honestly is. Offered more modestly in less pretentious studio conditions, it might have had a better reception. Failing that, realized as a visual form of radio drama, it might have found a proper, and perhaps more rewarding perspective.

Prozess von Schamgorod (The Schamgorod Trial) by Elio Wiesel. Direction, Peter Sodas. Costumes, Rolf Klein. Neues Theater, Halle, Germany. A German-language production at the

## Bronfman's love affair with the IPO continues

MICHAEL AJZENSTADT

**E**IGHTEEN years ago, a 20-year-old Russian-born pianist played the Liszt Second Piano Concerto with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. Last Tuesday at the Mann Auditorium, that same pianist, Yefim Bronfman, played the same concerto with the same orchestra during the festive celebrations of the orchestra's 60th anniversary.

Bronfman cannot find enough words to describe his long, ongoing emotional relationship with the orchestra. "The IPO is very special to me. My whole life is connected to the orchestra. I started my career with the orchestra and ever since I have had very close ties with it. I was in Israel virtually every year and I also played with them on tour in South America, Australia, Europe and the USA."

The IPO is much more than a

mere musical friend. Bronfman's sister and her husband are orchestra members. "The orchestra means a lot to me. It's like home, so now it's like celebrating your own birthday."

He continues that he has met "some of the great musicians I know through the IPO, from [Zubin] Mehta and [Leonard] Bernstein to [Daniel] Barenboim. The orchestra always attracted great people and I have always learned so much about music-making here. Certainly the IPO has a very strong gravity for me and my friends."

He adds that it is always great to play here because "Israel has a great public which is hard to compare to anywhere else."

Bronfman is a regular guest on our concert stages. For example, at the end of March, he returns to play six concerts with the IPO featuring three concerti within one week:

Brahms's first, Beethoven's third and Rachmaninoff's third. And during the current celebrations he still has four more concerti of a varied repertoire.

But he is not complaining, quite the contrary. "I enjoy playing a lot. I always say that musicians should be paid for the traveling and time away from home but not for playing because playing is fun."

Although Bronfman has an apartment in New York and is also currently looking for place in London, Israel is his real home and he makes a point of coming here up to four times each year to visit his family.

Bronfman is also a very active recording pianist with over 25 discs to his credit including the entire Prokofiev concerti with Mehta and the IPO.

He recently renewed his contract with Sony for an additional five years with discs featuring some of



Yefim Bronfman just can't get enough of the IPO.

the standard warhorses of the repertoire as well as more contemporary works.

"There is a change in the classical music scene and sales of discs are not good, so disc companies are looking for new ways of presenting music and one is new music." American Elliot Goldenthal, who writes a lot for Hollywood and is famous for his *Fire Water Paper: A Vietnam Oratorio*, is writing a concerto for piano and trumpet which will be recorded by Bronfman and Wynton Marsalis together with the concerto Shostakovich wrote for these instruments.

Yefim Bronfman plays Saint-Saens' Second Piano Concerto tomorrow in Jerusalem with Zubin Mehta leading the International Symphony Orchestra.

On Thursday (Tel Aviv) and Saturday (Jerusalem) he plays the piano solo in Beethoven's Triple Concerto with the Mehta and IPO and on Friday he repeats his rendition of the Liszt second concerto in Haifa.

## Perlman and Zukerman combine in angelic tandem

MICHAEL AJZENSTADT

**T**WO major attractions of the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra's Subscription Concert No. 2, conducted by Steven Sloane, were performances of two rarely played works. The performance of these works were special because they were for solo instruments seldom encountered: Sergei Koussevitzky's Concerto for double-bass and Giovanni Bottesini's *Pastorale Amorese* for two double basses.

The overpowering double bass, which naturally arouses expectations of an overwhelming sound, surprised the audience with its weak, understated tone and volume. The agility and flexibility produced from such an unwieldy-looking instrument, played by soloist Franco Petracchi, was also unexpected and attests to the fact that Petracchi is a veritable virtuoso who takes technical hurdles in his stride.

Koussevitzky's work is a product of necessity, created to supply a soloist's need of enlarging his instrument's meager repertoire. Availing himself of all the commonplace Romantic ingredients,

such as sentimentality and virtuoso fireworks, his would have made the best impression if left unwritten.

Bottesini's divertimento is, likewise, harmlessly entertaining, though melodious and technically demanding. Orchestra member Haya Yosha joined Petracchi in a brilliant, light-fingered performance. Sloane's rendition of Mussorgsky-Ravel's *Pictures at an Exhibition* was colorful, energy-charged and led appropriately to the pompous climax of the "Great Gate of Kiev."

Jerusalem Theater, December 12. Ury Eppstein

**THE ISRAEL Philharmonic Orchestra's** 60th anniversary celebrations are a series of ongoing highlights which are riveting, invigorating and sweeping. It is not easy to select the best performance during the first three evenings but the most complete were the two orchestral selections.

Zubin Mehta led his orchestra in a very sincere, powerful and dramatic reading of Schubert's

### CONCERT ROUNDUP

**Unfinished Symphony.** This rendition shifted perpetually between various opposing poles, from introvert to extrovert, from piano to forte in a most sublime way. The orchestra responded in the best possible way to Mehta's sensitive baton and together they played this masterpiece in a way which rediscovered it for the audience.

The orchestra also excelled in Richard Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel*, a short and very dramatic opus which moves quickly from tender poetic moments to full-scale dramatic outbursts. It was a stunning rendition which would not put to shame any major orchestra worldwide. The soloists were some of the best musicians in the world today. Murray Perahia topped his Mozart from the previous week with a spellbinding rendition of Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto, a very introvert performance in which he delved deep into the essence of the composition, drawing from it all its

minute subtleties and enormous riches.

In contrast, Yefim Bronfman presented a towering technical bonanza in Liszt's Second Piano Concerto. Mischa Maisky played Bloch's *Schelomo* with passion, drama, soul and power with Mehta and the orchestra supporting in an impressive manner. And to top all this came Itzhak Perlman and Pinchas Zukerman, two very good friends who just happen to be two of the greatest violinists in the world. They played, always in tandem, two concerti and four

sonatas, without ever trying to upstage one another. Each time they played it was as if we heard a conversation between angelic minstrels.

In addition, when Zukerman was playing the viola the combination between the darker viola and the violin was simply gripping. In short there was not one dull moment throughout these three concerti, and luckily there is still more to come.

Mann Auditorium, Tel Aviv, December 17, 18, 19. Michael Ajzenstadt

## Bentonoff's riveting performance

**S**OMETHING very unusual, perhaps even unique, happened in the Hedi Steinberg Auditorium of the Shaare Zedek Medical Center in Jerusalem on December 15.

Deborah Bentonoff, one of our veteran "greats" in the performing arts, appeared solo for over an hour in a program that kept a full house riveted.

Her text was based on stories from her life, on the joys and sorrows of memory, shaped into stage form by Dorona Ben-Dor and enhanced by only a few props.

The occasion was intended to honor a medical colleague of the center but it was also appropriate in that it marked and celebrated Jerusalem 3000. Dora Sowden

## A lonely ray of sunshine

MICHAEL AJZENSTADT

**T**rio, *Vain Ode*, C.F.C. performed by the Batsheva Ensemble, at the Inbal Auditorium (premieres). *Curtain 2* at Suzanne Dellal Auditorium (premiere).

**O**F the six new works presented, a single, lonely one stood out as a ray of sunshine in an otherwise dreary, drawn-out evening. It started with the Batsheva Ensemble's *Trio* by Noa Dar, *Vain Ode* by Lara Barsagel and C.F.C. by Sa'ar Magal.

All three choreographers proved that their talent lies elsewhere. The

### DANCE REVIEW

ORA BRAFMAN

program simply didn't soar. *Curtain 2* consisted of three more choreographed pieces by Inbal Pinto, Amiel Malale and Shelele Gonen.

Only one qualified for the job of the savior, that ray of light: *Wrapped* by Pinto.

At times she resembled Danny Ezralow with that out-of-nowhere sense of humor that is crazy, yet crystal clear in its warped logic. The group of seven dancers were

well-trained in theatrics and were a pure delight to watch, as were the stage production and costume design, done by Pinto herself.

The remaining two works by Gonen and Malale reflect directly on Eran Baniel, the artistic director. He was the choice of the Public Council for Culture, who preferred to nominate as artistic director of a major dance event a complete stranger to dance world.

Unfortunately, Baniel "bought" many poor works, since he could not separate the wheat from the chaff.

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BUSINESS & FINANCE

Tuesday, December 24, 1996

Bank of Israel cuts rates 0.5%

DAVID HARRIS

THE Bank of Israel's key short-term lending rate will be lowered by 50 basis points to 14.7 percent next month, the central bank announced yesterday.

over monetary policy. The bank is continuing to urge the government to implement the full NIS 7 billion budget-cut proposal, which is about to face second and third readings in the Knesset, while not bowing to pressure and raising taxes.

Gov't unveils schedule for banks' sales in '97

GALIT LIPKIS BECK

MI HOLDINGS, the state firm in charge of selling government companies, intends to sell shares in at least one bank in each quarter of next year, the company's general manager Meir Yacobson yesterday said.

According to Yacobson, foreign investors' interest tends to encourage local investors to buy shares. Taking the government's public offering of Bank Discount as an example, Yacobson said the Israeli public expressed interest in the sale only after the shares were snapped up by foreign investors.

compare the stock price of a public offering to financial investors with the price of selling a controlling interest. "These are two different markets, two different methods of sale and two types of target audiences," said Yacobson.

Porush: ILA land sales too slow

GALIT LIPKIS BECK

DEPUTY Housing Minister Meir Porush criticized the Israel Lands Administration (ILA) yesterday for its slow pace of land sales.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Northern Telecom buys 20% of Telrad: Northern Telecom Ltd., an international telecommunications company, exercised an option to buy 20% of Telrad's share capital for \$45 million, the companies informed the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange yesterday.

Dead Sea Magnesium cast first ingots: Dead Sea Magnesium cast its first magnesium ingots yesterday on the shores of the Dead Sea. The company said it's the first time metal was manufactured in Israel since King Solomon cast his copper at Etzion Gaver 3,000 years ago.

Maritime Bank agrees to buy 37% of Bank Carmel: Maritime Bank agreed to buy about 37% of Bank Carmel's shareholders equity for about NIS 60m. Following the bank's announcement to the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange, Maritime shares increased the maximum 10%.

The agreement is part of Carmel's plan to expand into commercial banking. The bank is currently active mainly in the mortgage sector. Carmel is among the smallest mortgage and investment banks in the country, while Maritime is one of the smaller commercial banks.

PM refuses to set inflation target for 2001

DAVID HARRIS

PRIME Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has so far declined to commit himself to a projected inflation level by 2001. During last week's meeting with Finance Minister Dan Meridor and Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel, it became clear there was a difference of opinion between the Treasury and the central bank as to the desired long-term inflation rate.



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American General to buy Home Beneficial

HOUSTON (Reuters) - American General Corp., one of the nation's largest diversified financial services groups, said yesterday it has a definitive agreement to acquire Home Beneficial Corp. for \$665 million.

EL Al: Christmas tourism on the rise

HAIM SHAPIRO

IN what could be the first sign of a recovery in the tourism industry, EL Al this week reported a flurry of last-minute reservations for Christmas from the US.

ISRAELI MONEY MARKETS

Table with columns for Currency, Patah (foreign currency deposit rates), and Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates. Includes sub-sections for CHECKS AND TRANSFERS and BANKNOTES.





Shares gain ahead of rate-cut decision

TEL AVIV STOCK MARKET

DAN GERSTENFELD



Two-Sided index

Maof index

SHARES closed higher yesterday as investors waited for the Bank of Israel's announcement on interest rates, traders said.

At the end of the trading day, the Bank of Israel said it was lowering its key lending rates for January by 0.5 percentage point to an annualized 14.7 percent.

The benchmark Two-Sided index rose 0.83%, or 1.72 points, to 210.09 on all-share turnover of NIS 98 million against NIS 80 million Sunday.

The Maof 25 blue-chip index gained 0.65% to 218.59.

"The session opened with nice gains and the market rose by more than 1%. Towards the end of trading day, we saw some profit-taking," said a trader at the First International Bank of Israel.

"The market is rising very fast and in the next few days we must

see a correction," said another trader. "But all the technical indicators are showing that the positive trend will continue after investors take profits."

"Everything looks good. The central bank was expected to lower the interest rate, the budget will be approved and it seems now that a deal over Hebron will be reached very soon," he added.

The market had expected a rate cut today of 0.3 to 0.5 point. Clal Israel, the main gainer on the Maof, rose 3.5%, but traders said there was no evident reason for the rise.

The most active shares were Koor Industries, which lost 0.75% on volume of NIS 4.6m; Bank Leumi, which rose 1% on volume of NIS 4m; and Teva Pharmaceutical Industries, which gained 0.75% on turnover of NIS 3.6m. (Reuter)

Eurobourses mixed in weak Christmas trade

WORLD MARKET ROUNDUP

LONDON (Reuter) - European bourses put on a mixed performance yesterday but trading was thin ahead of the Christmas break and some investors took profits after recent strong gains.

On currency markets, the dollar was barely changed from levels seen late on Friday and business was quiet with most dealing rooms winding down for the holiday.

London, Europe's biggest stock exchange, recovered its early losses to show a small profit but overall dealings were light and traders said they expected volume to taper off even further as the day progressed.

London's listless performance contrasted sharply with its record close on Friday when most European bourses were swept higher in a Christmas buying spree on Wall Street. But many investors opted to lock in profits yesterday.

The stock exchange's blue-chip FTSE closed at a peak of 4,077.6

on Friday, eclipsing the record set on October 21. At one point the FTSE was as high as 4,100.

European bourses drew little comfort from an unsettled opening by Wall Street yesterday. New York quickly clawed back early losses to show small gains by mid-afternoon in Europe.

Frankfurt's DAX index, which had surged 1.66 percent on Friday, closed down 0.3% after slow business with many traders having already left for the Christmas holidays. The 30-share DAX index closed down 8.88 points at 2,845.57.

In Paris, shares slipped in and out of profit but registered a gain of 0.3% by early afternoon.

The CAC-40 share index was up 4.85 at 2,283.38.

Munich was down 3.69% at 117.50 at one point. The company on Friday announced it had cut its first half loss and announced plans for a 500 million franc (NIS 300 million) capital increase.

Dow posts slim gain

WALL STREET REPORT

NEW YORK (AP) - Stocks were mostly lower yesterday amid some profit-taking on last week's advance, particularly among technology shares, but the Dow Jones industrial average recovered late in the session to post a slim gain.

The Dow gained 4.62 points to close at 6,489.02, rebounding in the last half hour from a 34-point dip after surrendering a 24-point morning advance.

Broad-market indexes pulled back modestly, with the Nasdaq market showing the worst damage as technology shares gave up some ground for the second consecutive session.

Stocks drew some early support from the bond market, where prices improved and the yield on the 30-year Treasury bond - a key determinant of corporate and consumer borrowing costs - fell to

6.58 percent, down from late Friday's 6.60%.

Consumer spending was up 0.5% in November. While that was down from a 0.7% gain in October, it was still slightly better than the 0.4% rise many analysts had been expecting.

Declining issues outnumbered advances by nearly a 5-to-4 margin on the New York Stock Exchange, with 1,129 up, 1,397 down and 803 unchanged.

NYSE volume totaled 339.94 million shares vs. 650.09 million in the previous session. The Standard and Poor's 500-stock index fell 1.94 to 746.93, and the NYSE's composite index fell 0.82 to 393.29.

The Nasdaq composite index fell 9.08 to 1,279.48, and the American Stock Exchange's market value index fell 1.03 to 580.98.

SUMMIT

(Continued from Page 1) concession was made, but the speculation is that it is linked to a timetable on the first of three IDF pullbacks.

There was talk last night of a US letter accompanying the agreement on this issue. In an apparent sign of symmetry, just as Arafat met with Israeli negotiators, Netanyahu met with Palestinian negotiators in Jerusalem yesterday afternoon.

As it stands now, in terms of the particulars of the deal, there will be a restricted weapons zone around the Jewish enclave in Hebron known by some as a "buffer zone," and Palestinian checkpoints will be set up along this area. Inside the area, Palestinian policemen will either carry pistols or short-range Ingram submachine guns.

These weaponry restrictions will also be in place on the Abu Sena hillside and in joint patrols by the two sides. Israel wanted to ensure that Palestinians would not have rifles within sniping range of settlers.

The main Shubaha Road in downtown Hebron, which the Israelis have closed to Arab traffic, will open gradually within weeks. Details for reopening the Arab

wholesale market in the Jewish quarter remain to be settled.

Last night, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators in Jerusalem discussed where the checkpoints on the Shubaha road will be established. "There is work going on," Ross said. "There is still a lot of work to be done. I think there are still issues to be resolved. I think you should focus on the fact that there is more work to be done." Ross said when asked if an agreement on Hebron was close.

Regarding other particulars, there will be no joint patrol near the Machpela Cave, and construction inside the Jewish area will not be subject to approval by the Palestinians, while construction of tall Arab buildings around the Jewish compound will be restricted.

"There will be no change in the wording of the agreement," said top Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat.

Both sides feel they are working under pressure from the US to complete the talks. Since the US criticized Israeli settlement activity last week, the US has felt free to be tougher in publicly urging the Palestinians to reciprocate to Israeli concessions, Israeli officials say.

Table of Tel Aviv Stock Market (TEL AVIV STOCKS) with columns for Name, Price, Change, and Volume. Includes sections for Multi-sided trading, Two-sided trading, AFTERNOON, and MORNING.

ISRAEL DISCOUNT BANK advertisement with logo and slogan 'THE PEOPLE YOU CAN BANK ON'.

Table of International Stock Prices with columns for Name, Price, Chg, Name, Price, Chg, Name, Price, Chg, Name, Price, Chg.

Table of Key Representative Rates including US Dollar, Sterling, and Mark rates.

Table of New York Market Indexes including DJ Industrials, NYSE Composite, and various sector indices.

Small advertisement for CommStock Trading Ltd. with contact information.

Hull nets 500th goal

ST. LOUIS - Brett Hull scored his 26th career hat trick and became the 24th player in NHL history to score 500 goals...

Flyers 2, Blackhawks 2 The Philadelphia Flyers' four-game shutout and seven-game winning streaks ended...

After scoring in each of the first two periods, Hull was credited with his 500th career goal 20 seconds into the third...

Garth Snow made 30 saves for the Flyers, 9-0-2 since last losing November 27...

Replays clearly showed the puck hit Matteau. Hull's goal stood for about five minutes until he huddled with off-ice officials...

Tony Amonte also scored and Ed Belfour stopped 25 shots for the Blackhawks...

"I was telling Matty (Matteau) I can't take that, it's your goal," Hull said...

Brendan Shanahan, Vyacheslav Kozlov and Jamie Pushor scored consecutive goals in the second period...

But midway through the period, Hull rifled a slap shot from the right faceoff circle through Fiset's pads...

Edmonton led 2-1 after 20 minutes and Shanahan tied it with a blast from just inside the blue line...

"I had been thinking about it all year," Hull said...

Detroit, which had gone winless in three games (0-2-1), moved ahead for good at 9:46 when Kozlov's shot deflected off the stick of Oilers defenseman Boris Mironov...

Rangers captain Mark Messier reached a pair of career milestones in leading his team to victory over the division rival Florida Panthers...

Flames 7, Coyotes 2 German Titov sparked a three-goal first period with a pair of power-play goals...

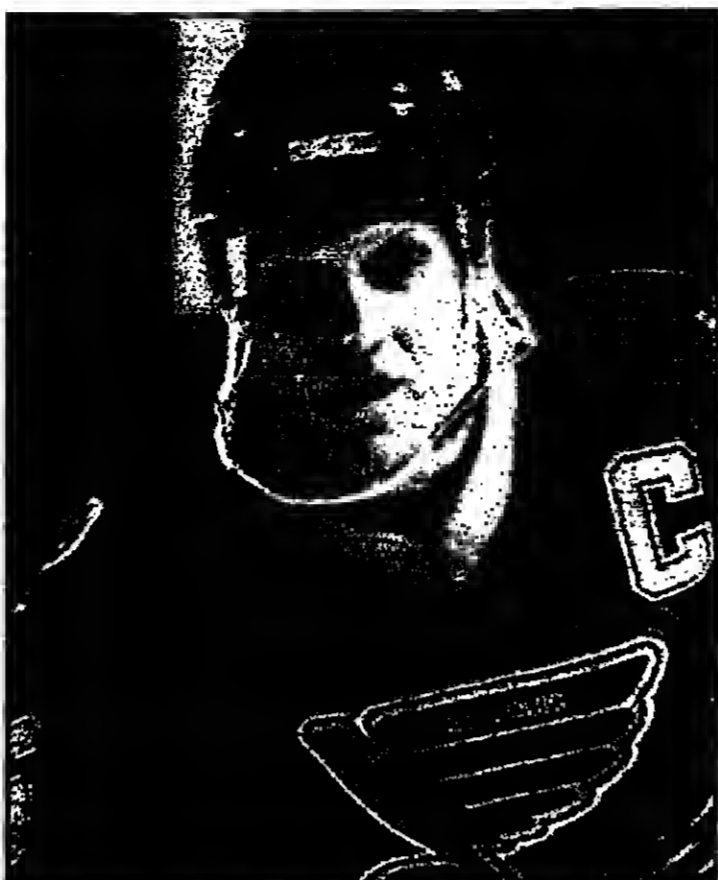
Alexei Kovalchuk and Niklas Sundstrom added two goals each, and Brian Leetch registered four assists...

Edmonton led 2-1 after 20 minutes and Shanahan tied it with a blast from just inside the blue line at 2:23...

Ray Sheppard had a hat trick for the visiting Panthers.

Todd Hlushko, Jarome Iginla, Dallas 21 10 3 45 99 78 Detroit 18 11 6 42 104 86 St. Louis 18 18 5 31 101 102 Phoenix 14 16 4 32 89 107 Chicago 14 18 4 32 88 82 Toronto 14 21 0 28 104 123

SUNDAY'S RESULTS: N.Y. Rangers 7, Florida 3 St. Louis 7, Los Angeles 4 Detroit 6, Edmonton 2 Philadelphia 2, Chicago 2 Calgary 7, Phoenix 2



SCORING MACHINE - Brett Hull became the 24th NHLer to join the 500 club.

Theoren Fleury and Ron Stern also scored for the Flames, who posted their first victory over Phoenix since March 17, 1995...

Keith Tkachuk and Darrin Shannon scored for the Coyotes.

NHL SCORING LEADERS table with columns for Player, Team, GP, G, A, PTS, PIM.

Reeves fired as Giants coach

Skippers of Rams and Falcons also gone

EAST RUTHERFORD (AP) - Dan Reeves was fired yesterday as coach of the New York Giants football team.

"I just think that we were not going in the right direction," general manager George Young said.

Reeves compiled a 31-33 record in four seasons, missing the playoffs the past three years and posting losing record the last two...

Asked when he made up his mind on Reeves, Young said it was not a sudden decision.

"It evolved over the second half of the season," Young said.

"I'm not apologizing for anything. We made a decision. We wanted to go in a different direction. We felt we wanted to change leadership."

Reeves, who still had one year to go on a five-year contract, met with Young earlier in the day...

The Giants' failures on the field were not the main reason Reeves won't be back. He battled with Young and Tom Boesman, the team's director of player personnel...

returned after being told by Giants owners that things were not going to change.

Reeves came to the Giants in 1993, taking over a team that was bitterly divided after missing the playoffs in its only two seasons under Ray Handley.

Handley got the job after Parcells resigned shortly after a Super Bowl win over Buffalo in January, 1991.

Reeves, whose contract with Denver had not been renewed after 12 seasons and three Super Bowl appearances, was Young's third choice for the job...

The Giants were crushed by San Francisco in the second round of the playoffs and Simms and Lawrence Taylor both retired after the season.

New York nearly made the playoffs in 1994 with a season-ending seven-game winning streak, but lost out on a tiebreaker...

The pressure to succeed put a strain on Brown's relationship with Reeves and the two have been at odds the past two years.

Reeves is one of four NFL coaching casualties in recent days. The New York Jets sent Rich Kotite packing following a woeful 1-15 season...

22nd annual winter soccer youth tournament starts Friday

THE 22nd annual winter youth and junior soccer tournament will be held throughout the country from Friday until next Thursday...

JOEL GORDIN

factors in getting Israeli soccer back into Europe. Erel said he was confident that, as a result of the tournament, Israel would be chosen to hold the European Youth Championships in the year 2000.

A total of 10 teams from nine countries will take part. Israel, Sweden, Switzerland, Belgium, Slovakia and Turkey will contest the junior (under-16) section and Israel, Greece, Cyprus and Hungary will take part in the youth (under 17 section).

The games will be held at nine grounds throughout the country.

Outlining the history of the annual tournament, Israel Football Association managing director Ya'acov Erel stated that it had been started at a time when Israel was isolated from European sports for political reasons.

Maccabi Tel Aviv wins tennis youth tourney

TENNIS: Maccabi Tel Aviv won the final of the Champlioo of Champions youth (ages 12-14) tennis league at Hadar Yosef on Saturday...

LOCAL SCENE HEATHER CHAT

Mickey Halika, Dan Kutler and Yoav Bruck were some of the other winners.

SQUASH: Fit at fifty (and over) are the entrants for the Passport Scotch Israel Masters 1996 Open Squash Championships...

results of the contest will determine the winner. For details, call 03 9560537.

RUGBY: While the rugby season is well under way, a squad of 10 players and two officials are reading themselves for the preliminaries of the World Cup Seven (seven-a-side) tournament to be played in Uruguay next month.

At home, Tel Aviv is leading the league and this week takes on Kibbutz Yezre'el at the Sportek in a Cup game...

PRESIDENTIAL TREATMENT: If you're eight-years-old and you like soccer, it helps if your grandmother is Reuma Weizman...

ORIENTEERING: The orienteering competition to be held from Thursday to Saturday will mark two firsts for the sport...

The routes will cover Neot Kedumim on Thursday, Park Canada on Friday and Mesua Forest on Saturday.

Euro 96 star Sammer wins 'footballer of year' award

Barcelona's Ronaldo places second

PARIS (Reuters) - Matthias Sammer, the best player in the European championship won by his team Germany, won the Golden Ball as 1996 European footballer of the year yesterday.

The Borussia Dortmund libero, who has also helped his club to win the German Bundesliga for the last two seasons, was presented with the prestigious trophy in a small ceremony on French television organized by the magazine France Football.

"I want to include Borussia Dortmund and the German team in this award because it was thanks to their efficacy that I was able to express myself to my best," Sammer said.

In the annual poll by European soccer writers, Sammer won the award by exactly the same number of points as AC Milan striker George Weah, 10th this time, did in 1995.

His victory was close, just three points separating him from Barcelona's Brazilian wonder Ronaldo, while England striker Alan Shearer of Newcastle United was third with 109 points.

Ronaldo was actually first on more ballots than Sammer - 16 to 13 - and featured on more ballots altogether - 39 to Sammer's 35. But Sammer had more votes in the top three.

"I naturally had a small hope that I might win (the award) but I didn't really expect it. I just wanted to be in the top five," said Sammer, who was German footballer of the year for the second time in 1995.

Sammer, born in the former East Germany in 1967, was the most influential player in the German side that beat the Czech Republic

in the European championship final at Wembley in June.

He scored the Germans' winning goal in their quarter-final against Croatia and helped them to win a nail-biting semifinal against host England in a penalty shootout after a 1-1 draw.

Sammer said he hoped his Golden Ball achievement would encourage other soccer players from the former East Germany.

"There have been footballers of great quality from there but we were not allowed to develop fully," he said.

There were two Germans in the top 10, with the Euro 96 winners' captain Juergen Klinsmann, who was second last year, finishing fifth this time, and three Frenchmen.

Manchester United's Eric Cantona, who has been overlooked by his national team boss Aimé Jacquet in the last two seasons, was higher in seventh place than two France regulars Marcel Desailly of AC Milan and Youri Djorkaeff of their neighbors Internazionale.

Juventus's brilliant playmaker Alessandro Del Piero was fourth and Davor Suker, Real Madrid's Croatian striker, sixth.

Table with 2 columns: Rank, Name, Club.

Arsenal protests Wright dismissal

LONDON (Reuters) - English Premier division side Arsenal submitted an official complaint to the Football Association yesterday about Ian Wright's sending-off at Nottingham Forest on Saturday.

Referee Stephen Lodge dismissed Wright for violent conduct, an offense which carries an automatic three-match ban, after the Arsenal striker clashed with Forest defender Nikola Jerkan.

The FA said Lodge and assistant referee John Holtbrook would be sent a videotape of the incident and asked for their observations.

Lodge said he had not seen the incident but had relied on the evidence of Holtbrook before showing Wright the red card.

Triumph and tragedy at Atlanta 96

NEW YORK (AP) - It was clearly a passing of the torch in Atlanta.

While Carl Lewis won his fourth Olympic long jump medal in the 1996 Olympics, the clear star of the Games was Michael Johnson, who completed an unprecedented double in the 200 and 400, including a world record 19.32 seconds in the shorter sprint.

The titles gave Johnson a share of the claim to world's fastest human, the other part going to Canada's Donovan Bailey, who lowered the 100-meter record to 9.84 in winning the Olympic title.

not only the title, but admirers and praise for African soccer.

But casting a dark shadow over all of Lewis's, Bailey's, Johnson's and Nigeria's glory at the morning of July 27 in Centennial Olympic Park, the explosion, which occurred midway through the event with it.

The Games already were drawing to a close.

CLASSIFIEDS section containing various advertisements for real estate, services, and businesses.

CRITIC'S CHOICE

THEATER

HELEN KAYE

SHAKESPEARE in Beirut? You bet! Carmel artistic director Omri Nitzan has directed a...

CLASSICAL MUSIC

MICHAEL AJZENSTADT

THE Liturgical festival of sacred music, an old Jerusalem tradition, opens tonight with a festive concert by the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra...

TELEVISION

ELANA CHIPMAN

THE celebrated French Romantic writer Voltaire was born 300 years ago. The Discovery Channel celebrates with a four-part series...

FILM

ADINA HOFFMAN

LAST MAN STANDING - A lasciviously photographed reworking of Akira Kurosawa's 1961 samurai classic...



American soprano Kelley Nassief performs in the opening of the Jerusalem Liturgical festival of sacred music, tonight.

Prohibition-era gangster film is the story of a mysterious drifter (Bruce Willis) who wanders into a small Texas town...

SPITFIRE GRILL - The tear-jerking tale of a young woman's attempts to start life afresh in a small Maine town after her release from jail...

TELEVISION

CHANNEL 1

6:31 News in Arabic 6:45 Exercise Hour 7:00 Good Morning Israel

EDUCATIONAL TV

8:00 Moses in Jewish Tradition 8:30 Family Ties 9:00 Reading 9:30 Health 9:45 Programs for the young 10:15 French 10:30 Mathematics 10:40 Literature 11:15 Science 11:30 Geography and Technology 12:00 Geography 12:30 Everything's Open 13:00 The One Liner 14:00 Surprise Train 14:20 Kitty Cat and Tommy 14:35 Babar the Elephant 15:00 Zombi

CHANNEL 1

15:30 Tinytown Tales 15:50 Booty The Mystic Island 16:00 What's the Noise? - classical music 16:45 Super Ben 16:55 Zap to Basel 16:59 A New Evening 17:34 Shekeep - live show 18:16 News in English ARABIC PROGRAMS 18:30 Aprogo 18:00 News in Arabic HEBREW PROGRAMS 18:30 News flash 19:31 Affens in the Family 20:00 News 20:50 Lotto results live 20:55 Mine Host Merit Par 22:00 High-Tech Hate - Canadian documentary about advanced communications technology used by racists 23:00 Here's Room for Everyone - documentary about the beliefs of different religious groups relating to Elijah's Cave on Mt. Carmel 23:30 News 23:55 Midnight Mass - broadcast from the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth

CHANNEL 2

13:00 Doogie Howser, MD 13:30 Blossom 14:00 Echo Point 14:30 Junior News - news magazine for youth 15:00 Aladdin - adventure series 16:00 Bold and Beautiful 17:00 News magazine with Rafi Reshet 17:30 The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air 18:00 My So-Called Life 19:00 Hartzutzim 19:20 The Price is Right 20:00 News 20:30 Ramat Aviv Gimel - new season 21:15 Fact with Israel 22:00 News Night 23:15 News 00:00 News 00:05 News 00:15 Encounters with Kobi Mladen 1:00 Christmas Concert - Schubert's Mass in G major, John Rutter's Requiem (Part 2) and 19th and Christmas Carols. Includes 1996-97 Christmas tree and a streetwise wife have nothing in common except for the fact that they steal. With Amy Irving and Patsy Kensit. (84 mins.) 3:45 On the Edge of the Shelf

CHANNEL 2

14:05 Bugle, the Little Helicopter 14:40 The Great Flood 14:40 Junior News 15:00 French programs 16:00 At the Movies

CHANNEL 3

8:00 Sisters (pt) 8:00 One Life to Live (pt) 9:45 The Young and the Restless (pt) 10:30 Days of Our Lives (pt) 11:20 Pella Negra (pt) 12:10 Neighbors (pt) 12:35 Dallas (pt) 13:30 Sporting at 1:30 14:10 Focus On! 14:50 States 15:50 Days of Our Lives 16:40 Neighbors 17:10 Dallas 18:00 One Life to Live 18:45 The Young and the Restless 19:30 Local broadcast 20:00 Pella Negra 20:50 Beverly Hills 90210 21:40 Eye Eye Birds (1995) - remake of the 1963 musical. With Vanessa Williams and Jason Alexander (125 mins.) 23:20 Night Stand with Dick Dietrick 23:45 Law and Order 00:30 Silk Stalkings 1:20 North of 60

JORDAN TV

14:05 Bugle, the Little Helicopter 14:40 The Great Flood 14:40 Junior News 15:00 French programs 16:00 At the Movies

WHERE TO GO

Notices in this feature are charged at NIS28.08 per day, including VAT. Insertion every day of the month costs NIS220.85 per line, including VAT, per month.

JERUSALEM Conducted Tours HEBREW UNIVERSITY, Tours of the Mount Scopus campus, in English, daily Sun-Thur, 11 am from Bonfium Reception Centre, Sherman Administration Bldg, Buzsaki, 9, 23, 25, 28. For info, call 882818.

TEL AVIV MUSEUM Following the Shock of the Holocaust, Tel Aviv Museum of Art presents a special exhibition of 1930s-40s Jewish art.

HAIFA WHAT'S ON IN HAIFA, dial 04-8374253. JERUSALEM CINEMA THEQUE Fargo 5, 9:45 \* Amadeus 7 \* She Wore a Yellow Ribbon 7, 9:30 \* Spitfire Grill 9:30 \* Kingpin 7, 9:30 \* Jingle All the Way 7

GENERAL ASSISTANCE

EMERGENCY PHARMACIES Jerusalem: 6 Loh Yaffe, 678-1501; Be'er Sheva: 678-1501; Shufra: Shufra Rd, 681-0108; Dar Aldeeva, Harod's Gate, 628-2038.

POLICE 100 FIRE 102 FIRST AID 101

HAIFA CINEMA CAFÉ AMAMI = 6325755 Stealing Beauty@Summer 7:30, 9:45 \* Independence Day 4:15, 6:45, 9:15 \* Glimmer 7:15, 9:45, 12:15 \* Kingpin 7:15, 9:45, 12:15 \* The Nutty Professor 7:15, 9:45, 12:15 \* The Nutty Professor 7:15, 9:45, 12:15

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Zoo 16:30 Documentary 17:00 News flash 17:02 Fun with Physics 17:15 Cytone Tracy 18:00 French programs 19:30 News headlines 19:35 Murphy Brown Magazine 01 20:50 Christmas in Connecticut (1992) - remake of the 1945 comedy about a magazine writer who finds herself entertaining a war veteran for Christmas, together with her boss. With Kris Kristofferson and Tony Curtis. Directed by Arnold Schwarzenegger (100 mins.) 22:00 News in English 22:25 Something Wilder 23:15 Mission Impossible 00:00 The Sound of Christmas - Julie Andrews and John Denver 1:00 Midnight Mass live from the Vatican

MIDDLE EAST TV 7:00 Quantum Shopping 8:00 TV Shop 8:30 One 16:30 Larry King 16:50 Hunter 16:55 Family Challenge 17:45 Family Matters 18:10 Saved by the Bell 18:35 Day and Date 18:30 World News Tonight (Arabic) 20:00 American Football 21:00 NBA 23:30 The Club Club 00:00 TV Shop 2:00 Quantum Shopping 3:00 TV Shop

CHANNEL 1 15:30 Tinytown Tales 15:50 Booty The Mystic Island 16:00 What's the Noise? - classical music 16:45 Super Ben 16:55 Zap to Basel 16:59 A New Evening 17:34 Shekeep - live show 18:16 News in English ARABIC PROGRAMS 18:30 Aprogo 18:00 News in Arabic HEBREW PROGRAMS 18:30 News flash 19:31 Affens in the Family 20:00 News 20:50 Lotto results live 20:55 Mine Host Merit Par 22:00 High-Tech Hate - Canadian documentary about advanced communications technology used by racists 23:00 Here's Room for Everyone - documentary about the beliefs of different religious groups relating to Elijah's Cave on Mt. Carmel 23:30 News 23:55 Midnight Mass - broadcast from the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth

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JORDAN TV 14:05 Bugle, the Little Helicopter 14:40 The Great Flood 14:40 Junior News 15:00 French programs 16:00 At the Movies

CHANNEL 1 6:31 News in Arabic 6:45 Exercise Hour 7:00 Good Morning Israel

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CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

Crossword puzzle grid with clues: ACROSS 1 They may be seen racing over spire (7,7) 9 Dad, after commercial, seen in study, expressionless (7) 10 Struggle with job following hostility (4-

הכנאמן השבוע

## Weizman 'regrets' humiliating gays

THE conflagration sparked by President Ezer Weizman's remarks about gays was put out yesterday, but the embers were still burning, following a lengthy meeting between the president and representatives of the gay population, who were joined by MKs.

The president sees legislation which discriminates as undermining the foundations of democracy, the rules of natural justice, and the dignity and freedom of man, and he has no intention of encouraging legislation which leads to discrimination between citizens of the state regardless of origin, religion, sex or sexual orientation," a statement released after the meeting said.

"The president says that any deed or expression in which people are publicly humiliated - or deeds which can be interpreted as such - should be regretted," the statement continued. "The dignity, rights and well-being of all the citizens of Israel must be upheld."

The statement was read out by Weizman's bureau chief, Arye Shumer, to the press. It followed an hour-long meeting between the president, his wife Reuma at his side, and representatives of the Society for the Protection of Personal Rights, led by Dr. Uzi Even. They were accompanied by

**BATSHEVA TSUR**

MKs Yael Dayan and Ofer Pines of Labor, and Meretz leader MK Yossi Sarid and MK Naomi Chazan.

"It was not an easy meeting but it was most helpful," Sarid said later. "The president saw that gays are human beings without horns, exemplary citizens. If he had known this before, he would not have made the remarks."

Sarid said he was encouraged by the fact that the president had withdrawn his remarks about the need for legislation against homosexuals and that he had expressed regret.

Dayan, who heads the Knesset lobby for gay rights, and is Weizman's niece, appeared somewhat less satisfied, saying that the president had "not said enough after he said too much." She expressed the fear that those who had jumped onto the bandwagon - "rabhis, MKs" - would not quiet down quickly and that the delegitimization of a large segment of the population could lead to violence against them.

"The president did not apologize," she said. "That is not his style. But he did understand things he had not known before, such as the legislation in the Knesset which speaks of sexual orientation and

not sexual perversion; and the IDF regulations about homosexuals. This has been an expensive lesson for the [gay] community. I hope the president won't slip up again in the future," she said of her uncle.

Even said, however, that the gays were "satisfied with what we achieved. We had a chance to express our deep hurt over the president's remarks... We understand that he is ready to accept now that things are not the way they were when he was a youngster. The atmosphere was one of reconciliation."

He said the president learnt that gays constitute 10 percent of the population. "There is now an attempt to prevent further damage and the dialogue will be continued," Even said.

The World Congress of Gay and Lesbian Jewish Organizations sent a letter to Weizman expressing concern over his remarks. The group urged him to retract them and apologize.

Outside Beit Hamassi, about two dozen demonstrators carrying the national flag with the word "Moledet" (Homeland) printed on it in green, kept up a steady chant: "Homos, go back to the closet." Several of the demonstrators held placards bearing the formula: "Homo + Lesbian = Meretz."

## Histadrut mulls national strike

THE Histadrut will decide today whether to stage a national labor strike on Thursday, in response to the government's budget proposals.

At a meeting yesterday Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told Histadrut chairman Amir Peretz that in setting the budget proposals the government has gone a long way not to affect the workers or the weaker classes. There are no direct increases in taxation, and the government aims for continued economic growth, tamed inflation and lower unemployment, Netanyahu said.

The Prime Minister asked the Histadrut not to strike. Peretz told him a decision would be taken today during a meeting of Histadrut senior officials.

Meanwhile, the Treasury last night issued an updated list of its budget proposals and changes it agreed with the Knesset Finance Committee. These include:

- Capital-investment aid to factories, where the total investment is more than NIS 160 million, at 20% in development zones A and

**DAVID HARRIS and DAVID RUDGE**

10% in zones B. Where the investment is less than NIS 160m., at 24% and 12%. These rules will only apply in 1997, before reverting to 20% and 10% rates.

- Capital-investment aid to tourism projects at 20% in A zones and 10% in B zones.
- Capital-investment aid in agricultural projects at 30% in A zones and 10% in B zones.
- Soldiers' demobilization grants. Within 60 days officials will come up with new proposals.

With regard to privatization, Netanyahu said he would arrange a series of meetings during the process of selling state assets. The Histadrut has made plain its strong opposition to the government's intention to sell many of its companies, starting next year. The Histadrut claims this will lead to widespread job losses, an argument refuted by the government.

The Histadrut decided over two weeks ago to declare a general

labor dispute on behalf of the organized workforce throughout the country, as a prelude to the proposed strike to protest the government's budget cuts.

The Tel Aviv Regional Labor Court Sunday ruled in favor of a petition by the management of Mekorot and its subsidiary Shaham against the workers staging a general strike.

The court ruled that the workers could stage a local strike for a three-hour period from 1 p.m. on one day only from Thursday, provided it was coordinated between management and workers committees at the water company's various sites.

Ahead of the commencement of the Knesset debate on the Budgetary Arrangements bill, Finance Minister Dan Meridor told reporters he believes the market should be very satisfied with the budget deliberations in recent days. "I look at the general picture, before I go into the details," he said. "I won't claim victory, until the work is finished next week in the Knesset plenum."



A demonstrator with a sign reading "The Bible says! Homosexual = beast" protests outside Beit Hamassi yesterday, during a meeting between President Ezer Weizman and a delegation of gays. (Brian Hendler)

**WEATHER**

Galilee	6-15
Haifa	12-22
Tiberias	11-23
Afula	7-22
Samartha	6-18
Tel Aviv	11-21
Jerusalem	7-17
Beerseba	9-22
Dead Sea	13-25
Eilat	11-24

Forecast: Partly cloudy to clear.

**AROUND THE WORLD**

City	LOW		HIGH		Weather
	F	C	F	C	
Amsterdam	29	16	36	2	clear
Berlin	30	18	34	2	partly cloudy
Buenos Aires	11	-11	14	-8	partly cloudy
Chicago	33	1	42	7	clear
Copenhagen	38	3	42	7	clear
Frankfurt	34	1	36	2	partly cloudy
Helsinki	19	-7	13	-8	clear
Hong Kong	14	-10	21	-6	clear
London	47	8	57	14	partly cloudy
Madrid	53	12	63	18	clear
Manila	29	27	32	1	partly cloudy
Moscow	33	1	37	3	partly cloudy
New York	48	9	54	12	partly cloudy
Paris	48	9	54	12	partly cloudy
Rome	51	12	55	13	partly cloudy
Stockholm	16	-9	23	-5	partly cloudy
Tokyo	51	13	55	13	partly cloudy
Toronto	31	-1	35	2	partly cloudy
Vancouver	44	7	48	9	partly cloudy
Zurich	37	2	41	5	partly cloudy

## Nazareth ready for Christmas

NAZARETH is putting up more decorations and planning more events to make this year's Christmas celebrations as festive as possible.

More decorations are lining the streets of the mixed Moslem and Christian Arab city this year, enlivening the atmosphere, and extra events are planned in addition to the traditional ones to mark the holiday and the new year.

Hotels in the city were reported to be nearly full with pilgrims and foreign visitors, despite the drop in tourism.

Shops, meanwhile, appeared to be doing a brisk trade in the sales of presents, trees and decorations

**DAVID RUDGE**

for the holiday, despite concern of a possible recession because of budget cuts and the prospect of higher taxes.

"There is a real holiday atmosphere in the city. There are more street decorations and the shops are also decorated and playing Christmas music as in previous years," said Nazareth City Council spokesman Ramzi Hakim.

The traditional Christmas reception was held for leading local dignitaries - and foreign visitors, including embassy representatives, at City Hall last night.

A Christmas parade is to be staged through the main street of

the city this afternoon, with the participation of choirs and groups from abroad, as well as Arab Christian communities in the region.

"More than 10,000 people are expected to take part in the parade itself," said Hakim. "Throughout the week, we will be staging many events including luncheon concerts in the city. These are all part of events leading up to Nazareth 2000."

Meanwhile, Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat intends to be in Bethlehem for Christmas this year, as he was last year, tourism officials said yesterday.

Bethlehem Mayor Elias Freij is hospitalized with pneumonia and will not attend the festivities.

## Haifa Chemicals talks break down

TALKS between management and workers of the strike-bound Haifa Chemicals factory broke down yesterday, despite some progress having been made. The Haifa Regional Labor Court will reconvene today to hear reports from both sides.

The Histadrut, in the talks yesterday, proposed that 60 employees take voluntary retirement and also agreed that any grade rises be deferred for a year, as well as other cutbacks aimed at reducing the company's costs.

Management, however, insisted that grade rises be deferred for two years and also complained about the difficulties in conducting negotiations while disruptive action by the workers continues.

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